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A Reformed Weekly

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Canada's first Mennonite university started

Alan Doerksen

WINNIPEG — It's not called a university, but that's what the Mennonite College Federation (MCF) is. The Manitoba government recently gave three Winnipeg-based Mennonite Bible colleges the go-ahead to form the federation, which will be, in effect, the first Mennonite university in Canada.

Spokespersons for two of the founding colleges are optimistic about MCF. It may not be surprising, though, that Nicholas Hirst, editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, has expressed mixed feelings about it.

Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), Concord College (formerly Mennonite Brethren Bible College) and Menno Simons College are the three schools which have teamed up to form the federation. Each college is associated with a different group of Mennonites — the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC), the Mennonite Brethren, and the Friends of Menno Simons, respectively).

MCF's organizers describe its vision as being "to serve more effectively the constituencies of each of the co-operating colleges, and to be a stronger witness to society ... by preparing students for lives of Christian faith and service in church and society."

Co-operation allows broadening

By co-operating, the three colleges will be able to significantly broaden their academic programs, says Concord College president Harry Olfert. "Both CMBC and Concord have music departments that offer the same program," he says. By working together, the colleges could offer more variety in music courses.

Financial savings will be another good result of the federation, says Olfert. He is encouraged that the Manitoba government will provide $2.6 million a year in funding to MCF.

This is not at the expense of Manitoba's existing three universities. "It is not our intent for the government's money to be diverted from other universities to us," he asserts. "We're not getting funding at their level," he adds. MCF will get half of what the other three universities get in annual funding.

Large and small circles

Faculty members at MCF will not have to be Mennonites, but Olfert explains they "will be required to be in agreement with the Mennonite Brethren or the Mennonite Conference of Canada."

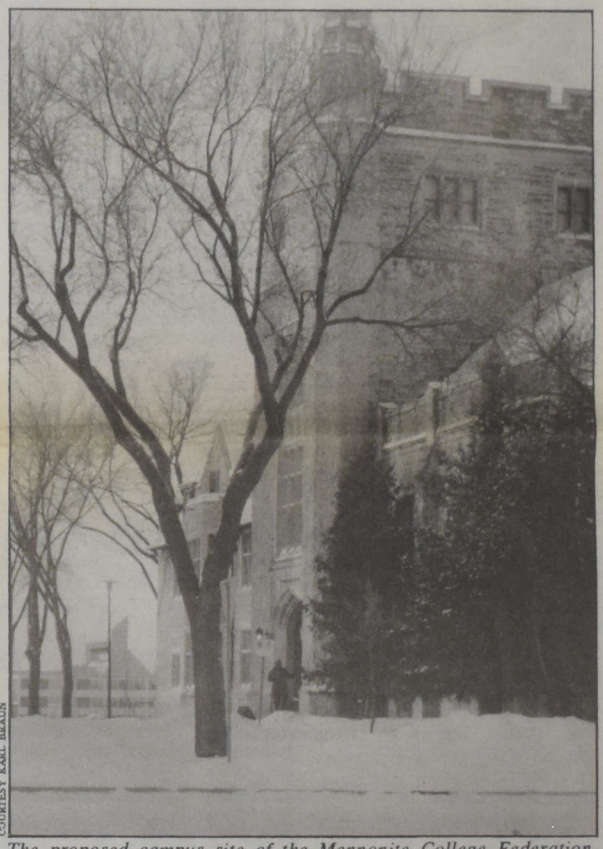
Although three Mennonite groups have worked closely together to make MCF a reality, Olfert says that in general, "there has not been a lot of inter-Mennonite co-operation," except with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and some business matters.

Karl Braun, director of development for CMBC, describes MCF as a large circle. Within the circle are three smaller ones, which represent the three Mennonite colleges.

Braun says Manitoba's offer of $2.6 million a year for MCF will cover "a significant portion" of the budget though less than half of it. Most funding will come from student tuition.

MCF will be, in effect, the Mennonite university in Canada,

See **MENNONITE** *page 2...*



COURTESY KARL BRAUN

The proposed campus site of the Mennonite College Federation. Currently, this is the Manitoba School for the Deaf. In the background (left) is the edge of the Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

New members enrich multicultural church

Robert VanderVennen

SCARBOROUGH, Ont. — When seven new members professed their faith in Jesus Christ and were received into membership of Grace Christian Reformed Church, Scarborough, Ont., they joined a worship community which already had members born and raised in some 30 different countries all over the world.

This international worship community is not as common as one might expect in the greater Toronto area, where membership — whether in Christian or other worship centres — is commonly segregated to one national and ethnic group. But Grace Church, Scarborough, tends to mirror the city, recently called the most multicultural city in the world, a city in which, *The Toronto Star* recently wrote, "more that 100 languages are spoken and the flags of 169 countries can rightfully be flown along with the Maple Leaf."

The new members are pictured in the accompanying photo (see p. 2) along with Evangelist John Kamerman (left) and Pastor John Rottman. On the left is the Cheng family, Min Li Lu and her husband, Dr. Qing Qi Cheng and their daughters Lulu and Helena. The Chengs came from the Chinese city of Xian (famous for its terracotta soldiers), but they moved to Scarborough from Oslo, Norway, where Dr. Cheng held a post-doctoral fellowship in astrophysics, after also living in the United States and Germany.

In the centre is Prama Kanagaratnam, who grew up as a nominal Buddhist in Sri Lanka.

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Zorro rides again, embodied by Anthony Hopkins ..... p. 7

How do you approach Muslims, Buddhists with your faith? ... p. 11

Lillian Doerksen's 'light to India' is still burning ..... p. 10

News

Mennonite groups, government co-operate to form university

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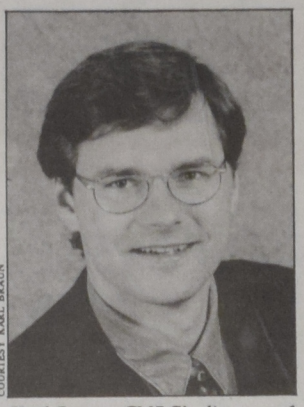
says Braun. The United States already has several Mennonite universities.

Talks about forming the federation started in 1994, when the three colleges and Steinbach Bible College set up a task force to investigate the potential for greater co-operation among them. Later on, the Mennonite College Federation Committee was formed, with members of each college except for Steinbach, which backed out at that point.

Recently, the Manitoba government passed legislation giving MCF degree-granting status equivalent to that of a university. The next step is for each group of Mennonites to agree to form MCF. In mid-July, CMC discussed the federation at its annual meeting in Stratford, Ont. "The principle of federation was approved by a very large majority," reports Dan Nighswander, conference minister of CMC.

Last October, the Manitoba conference of the Mennonite Brethren approved MCF, says Susan Brandt, editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald*.

George Rickert, president of Menno Simons College, says it favors the federation. The college's board voted on the issue in late July. But the



COURTESY KARL BRAUN

Karl Braun, CMBC's director of development.

Friends of Menno Simons will not be dealing with the federation issue at a denominational level, he says.

In August, MCF plans to buy a building near to CMBC. The federation will officially start on July 1, 1999. One effect of the plan is that Concord College will move to a building next to CMBC, says Braun. Menno Simons College will remain where it is, on the University of Winnipeg campus.

Some faculty of MCF will come from the three colleges, says Braun. Other staff will be hired later on.

Braun sees the main significance of MCF's formation as being: "to solidify the structures of what Mennonite education has to offer and supplementing that with liberal arts.... The vision is to consolidate the three colleges and build on the strengths."

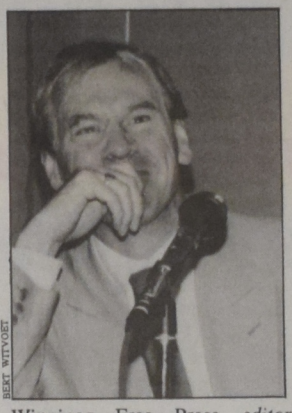
Smoothing out the wrinkles

Braun admits there have been some difficulties with the process of setting up MCF. "There have been reasons why the MB conference and CFC have been distinct from each other" and these need to be reconciled, he says. Some details about finance and governance of MCF have also been difficult to work out.

The main programs MCF will offer are: a three-year BA and a four-year honors BA, with majors in subjects such as: Christian studies, music, and conflict resolution. Conflict resolution is the "flagship" program of Menno Simons College, Braun explains.

At the heart of the programs will be a 30 credit-hour core of Christian courses, including biblical studies, theology, Anabaptist studies and church history, says Braun. Teaching at MCF will be from a Mennonite perspective, he notes.

Braun says there will also be



BERT WITVOET

Winnipeg Free Press *editor Nicholas Hirst*

"pre-professional programs" in agriculture, law, medicine, nursing and education. These programs will require three years of studies at MCF and one year at the University of Winnipeg or the University of Manitoba.

MCF will also offer certificate programs in business, journalism, and teaching of English as a Second Language.

Avoid narrowness, fear

MCF has set a goal of starting its courses in September 1999, but most will begin one year later, says Braun.

In the Winnipeg Free Press, editor Nicholas Hirst commented earlier this year: "If the new university seems to be a way for Mennonites to stand apart from the wider community, questions will persist about the university's access to public funds and its degree-granting powers. If, however, it seems to be a way for Mennonites to strengthen their own traditions and Manitoba society at large by contact and exchange with other traditions, and with the highest standards of scholarship, then there will be no basis for complaint."

Citing a recent case where a Mormon employee complained of being dismissed by another Mennonite educational institution, Hirst asserted, "Whatever the law requires, the Mennonite university should show that it is neither narrow nor fearful in its dealings with people of other religions."

Hirst also raised questions about why a Mennonite university should get funding ahead of other groups, such as Ukrainians or Jews. But on a positive note, he wrote that MCF "draws attention to one of Manitoba's strengths: the diversity of its population and, on a very practical level, it encourages an influx of Mennonites from throughout North America and beyond to study here."

Diverse church has multiethnic leadership

... continued from page 1

She started attending Grace Church at the urging of another Sri Lankan member of Grace, Ananda Casinathan.

The two women on the right are both Brazilian. Ana Marie Capotosto was attending a charismatic Catholic parish when she came upon a "Faith 20" TV broadcast of the Christian Reformed Church's radio and television ministry, the Back to God Hour. She consulted her priest who, in a very open manner, advised her to "let God lead you." So she called the number on the TV screen, talked with, and then met Leny Brouwer, Grace Church's contact person for "Faith 20."

No single factor

On the far right is Gisele Navarini, who met Ana Marie and whose first significant contact with Christianity was through attending a Back to God Hour banquet in Scarborough as a guest of Ana Marie. Gisele's mother is also now a Christian.

ROBERT VANDERVENNEN

Gisele is a graduate dentist from San Paulo who is now qualifying to practice dentistry in Canada.

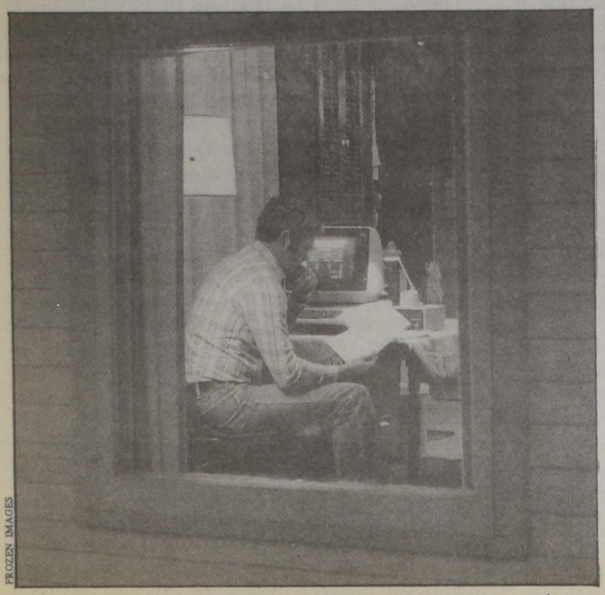
This diverse group joins a church which has elders and deacons from Bermuda, Jamaica, Trinidad, Tobago and Sri Lanka — as well as Canadians from Dutch descent.

There is no single factor which brings such people to Grace Church, says evangelist Kamerman. Personal invitations from friends and family are important, and a welcoming and friendly spirit in the church brings people back. A neighborhood newsletter helps, as do "Visitor Sundays," young adult suppers for singles on alternate Thursdays at the Kamerman's home, a good Sunday School program for children, and an active and caring diaconal ministry. Rottman's excellent preaching also helps bring people back for return visits.

Foretaste of the New Earth

Rottman is excited about this mix of people in the Grace congregation and in the church at large. He sees it as a foretaste of the scene pictured in Revelation 7 in which the "great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language," cry out their praise: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

As family farms become bigger, is there still a place for kids?



FROZEN IMAGES

"Some technology is kid friendly. Responsible young people can almost do the work of adults with the help of computers."

Elbert van Donkersgoed

The family farm was a great place to grow up in rural Ontario in the '50s, back when I was a kid.

The 22 "Bigger is Different" workshops sponsored by the Christian Farmers Federation last winter taught me a few things about how farm families raise their children today.

They seize opportunities to identify good activities; are intentional about the tasks they ask their children to perform; go out of their way, make room for and work at being creative; they make an effort to assign responsibilities that provide worthwhile experiences.

My recollection as a farm kid in the '50s is a list of routine physical activities that needed doing every morning or evening or Saturday — like forking the manure out of the calf pens. Technology has changed all that.

Much of the physical labor is gone from the family farm. Children are not needed to get the work done — and if the farm is dependent on their labor, there is something wrong.

Technology has speeded up the pace of farm life and made it less safe for children. Some of the emerging technology is not designed for their use. Parents do not put youngsters in charge of powerful $100,000 tractors.

Some technology is kid friendly. Responsible young people can almost do the work of adults with the help of computers, if all it takes is pushing a series of buttons.

Children today *are* different. They expect to be rewarded for work done. Today's farm children are paid for their involvement in farming activities.

Some workshop participants expressed concern that growing up on a modern farm has drawbacks. Specialized farms result in children experiencing only a small slice of agriculture. Farm management is far more important than physical labor on today's farms. It's a lot harder to create management experiences.

Different kids, same goals

But the goals of involving children in the farm remain: teaching responsibilities, developing hands-on farming experience, experiencing the joys of shared work, becoming aware and appreciative of what it takes to earn a living, developing a work ethic, understanding the value of a dollar.

Farm families still farm with the goal of developing an enterprise that will sustain future generations. Even when their children appear reluctant to follow in their footsteps farm families are loath to sell out. Buying back the farm if interests change in the future will be nigh impossible. After all, it is still a great place to raise a family.

Arizona baby survives partial-birth abortion

PHOENIX, Ariz. (EP) — A full-term baby girl was born alive after a Phoenix abortionist attempted to perform a partial-birth abortion June 30. The girl suffered a skull fracture and facial lacerations, but no apparent brain damage.

The 17-year-old mother of the 6-pound, 2-ounce girl went to the A-Z Clinic June 29. The clinic performs abortions through the 24th week. After an ultrasound test clinic workers determined that her unborn child was at just over 23 weeks gestation.

The girl returned to the clinic the next day for a partial-birth abortion, a procedure used for late-term abortions. In a partial-birth abortion, the unborn child is pulled feet-first through the birth canal, and while its head is still inside the mother the abortionist punctures the skull, suctions out the brain, crushes the skull, and finishes delivery of the dead baby.

Abortionist John Biskind told authorities that during the procedure he realized that the pregnancy was actually full-term. He halted the abortion and delivered the infant.

Biskind was censured by the state medical board in 1996 for "gross neglect" in his treatment of a 26-year-old woman who bled to death after an abortion.

Missing the point

Dr. Carolyn Gerster, head of Arizona Right to Life, said the average weight for an unborn baby is two pounds at 24 weeks and about 6.5 pounds at 36 weeks. She speculated, "A grave error was made in estimation of the size."

But Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, commented, "To focus on the abortionist's error in calculating the baby's age completely misses the point. The real issue is not the miscalculation, but the violence of the partial-birth abortion that was originally intended. A baby delivered prematurely between 23 and 24 weeks — the originally calculated age — would have a one-in-three chance of survival in a neonatal unit if delivered normally, and certainly would feel excruciating pain during the partial-birth abortion."

The police and county attorney are investigating to see if a crime was committed, but a police spokesperson said he did not expect charges to be filed. A Texas couple will adopt the child.

The U.S. House of Representatives votes July 23 on whether to override President Clinton's veto of a bill that would ban partial-birth abortion.

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Port Alberni-CJAV	7:00pm	1240
Prince George-CIRX	7:00am	94.3
Princeton-CHOR	8:00am	1400
Smithers-CFBV	9:15am	1230
Summerland-CHOR	8:00am	1450
Vernon-CJIB	9:30pm	940

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Montreal - CIQC	7:30am	600

ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBQ	8:00am	1340
Ft. McMurray-CJOK	8:30am	1230
'igh River-CHRB	6:30pm	1280
Edmonton - CKER	11:00pm	101.9
Westlock-CFOK	7:30am	1370

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL	8:00am	1280
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MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM	9:30am	950
Steinbach-CHSM	9:30am	1250
Winnipeg-CKJS	9:15am	810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK	9:30am	1240
Chatham-CFCO	6:30am	630
Fort Frances-CFOB	9:30am	640
Guelph - CJOY	8:30am	1460
Hamilton-CHAM	7:30am	820
Kapuskasing-CKAP	7:00am	580
Kingston-WLKC	7:30am	100.7
Newmarket- CKDX	9:30am	88.5
Oshawa-CKDO	8:00am	1350
Owen Sound-CFOS	10:30am	560
Pembroke-CHVR	10:00am	96.7
Samia-CHOK	7:30am	1070
Stratford-CJCS	8:45am	1240
Windsor-CKLW	8:30am	580
Wingham-CKNX	10:30am	920

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ	9:30am	700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY	7:00am	630

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY	6:00am	1420
Kentville-CKEN	8:30am	1490
Middleton-CKAD	8:30am	1350
New Glasgow-CKEC	7:30am	1320
Weymouth-CKDY	8:30am	103.1
Windsor-CFAB	8:30am	1450
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THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

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Guest Editorial

One view from the capital

Evangelist Billy Graham came to Ottawa to address the "real deficit." That's what the billboards and commercials said before he came at the end of June. The ads did their job and drew attention to the largest Crusade in the history of the nation's capital. Dr. Graham did his job and communicated the gospel message in a way that prompted thousands to take a step toward dealing with their personal spiritual deficits.

Dr. Graham also spoke about the moral deficit and encouraged his listeners to adopt a moral lifestyle. In response to the social deficit, donations were accepted for the foodbank and for new baby kits for pro-life agencies. Indeed, experience has shown that people give more to local charities after a Billy Graham crusade.

The justice deficit

Several aspects of the "real deficit" in Canada were addressed by Dr. Graham in his call for personal salvation, morality and charity. But there's more to that "deficit" in Canada, and addressing it remains a job for Canadian Christians. Ours is the challenge to show how Christ's gospel relates to the very business that makes Ottawa the capital city, seat of the government of Canada.

Christian Courier

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- ***express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective;***
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The justice dimension of the redemption story is also necessary to fully eliminate the real deficit in Canada. The restoration of right relationships between the people, as well as between individual people and their God, remains unfinished business.

Doing justice in Canada is not Dr. Graham's job. Canadians do not take kindly to foreigners telling them how to run things; I suspect Dr. Graham was advised about that sensitivity, as he was well-informed about other sensitivities in Ottawa. It is *our* challenge as Canadian Christians, particularly those from a Reformed heritage. My experience in Ottawa makes me convinced we could do something about the deficit of justice and reconciliation if we get serious about it.

Five years ago this summer, circumstances forced me to move from Western Canada to Ottawa. Since then I have been in a position to closely observe the workings of Parliament Hill. I see many opportunities where a well-developed, positive witness to the meaning of the gospel could make a significant contribution. It is sad that the extent of Christian witness in the nation's business is minuscule compared to the opportunities.

Where is the Reformed witness?

When I reflect on my own Reformed branch of the Christian community, questions arise. Why is it that the reformational movement, which came to Canada with a strong desire to influence the development of this country, has so little presence in our capital city? The fact is that not one of the many agencies, academic institutions and organizations associated with the Reformed tradition has a sustained presence, or even special events, in Canada's capital. In Reformed circles, Ottawa seems to be off the beaten track.

One reason may be the old myth that Toronto is the real centre of Canada. The offices of the Canadian branch of the Christian Reformed Church, for example, are located between Toronto and Grand Rapids, Michigan, site of the American CRC headquarters. Another factor is the healthy dose of Western independence within the Reformed community. But I suspect that a deeper reason may be that we are most comfortable in a protest mode when it comes to government. While Reformed rhetoric says government is for our good, in practice we are more likely to rally against, than contribute to, building good government. The suspicious attitude within the Reformed community toward the task of governing is obvious in comparison to the approach taken to business or agriculture. Collectively, we have remained outsiders when it comes to government.

As the Reformed community in Canada assesses its strengths and develops strategies for the next millennium, whether it be through the structures of church or related organizations, it is time to consider how we can collectively improve our contribution to Canada's business.

No anti-government rhetoric

The opportunities include major challenges facing the country. Let's begin with the following five challenges:

First, wherever we live, we can help to replace the prevalent anti-government rhetoric with a positive understanding of the role of government, as intended by our Creator. Attacking specific actions or policies is healthy political debate; but dumping on government itself as the Big Bad Evil plays into the hands of those who fuel anti-government sentiments for their own interests.

It doesn't surprise me that Ottawa, as a synonym for the federal government, is nearly a swear word in some parts of the country; but I become concerned when I hear similar sentiments within the Reformed family. As a former American, I am also disappointed to see how much some of the dumbed-down, simplistic approaches to Christian social action, more common south of the border, have replaced the solid depth I came to admire in Canada.

Cross-party challenge

Second, in order to move beyond foodbanks, charity and welfare systems, Christians must contribute to the struggle to find new ways that everyone can share in Canada's wealth. That wealth is increasingly mobile, while workers and their families are not; the result is a dangerously growing gap between those with a surplus and little attachment to community and those with inadequate resources. This challenge crosses all party lines and all levels of government.

Third, Canada's image of tolerant diversity may be as much myth as reality; but Christians share in the challenge of finding a healthy balance between what Canadians share in common and how we will show respect for differences. The very future of the country depends on keeping that delicate balance.

Fourth, right now there is room to influence Canadian foreign policy, but it takes a sustained effort. As private investment replaces foreign aid, influencing the shape of global development, such as the ban on landmines, has the potential for a greater return on investment than donating to charity. Christians, who see people around the world as family members, should at least be interested in helping to shape Canada's role in the world.

Becoming culturally relevant

Finally, there are specific justice issues in which Christian experience is particularly relevant. It is encouraging, for example, to see leadership by aboriginal neighbors in finding alternative ways to heal the wounds of abuse. If we seriously grapple with this need in the church, we can also provide leadership in the country because neither the court system nor current therapies are an adequate solution. This is just one opportunity among many.

Eliminating the justice deficit will be hard work, harder than tackling the fiscal deficit, and it will take a more sustained effort than a Billy Graham Crusade. It is essential if Christians want to be culturally relevant in Canada; and it comes with God's own promise that things will go well in the land where justice is done.

Kathy VanderGrift is an independent public policy analyst who lives in Ottawa.

A pro-life message for *all* Christians

CC reader Peter Aalhuizen of Burnaby, B.C. called the following to our attention. It is a letter from the Most Rev. Adam Exner, Archbishop of Vancouver, to all Catholic parishioners in the Diocese of Vancouver. Mr. Aalhuizen found the letter to "speak powerfully of the need for activism on the part of the people of God," and we agree.

My dear brothers and sisters,

In a recent public statement, Pope John Paul II discussed the terrible atrocities committed against Jewish people during the Second World War. He said that Christ's followers did not do enough to save Jews from the horror of the "Shoah" or Holocaust, which certainly formed one of historys darkest chapters.

Shameful, scandalous chapter

My friends, we ourselves are living through the most massive campaign against innocent human life that the world has ever seen. Every year legalized abortion claims tens of millions of lives worldwide. In our own country since 1969 over two million children have been violently suppressed before birth under state auspices. This surely forms the most shameful and scandalous chapter in our nation's history.

Yet our society engages in deep denial of what is taking place. Massive killing is accompanied by massive deception enforced by our society's political and cultural gatekeepers. Canadian law pretends that a child in the womb is not a human being, when everyone knows otherwise. Politicians treat abortion as a taboo subject. Abortion is the number one cause of death in Canada, but one would never know from the media. How often, in fact, we find the media calling evil good and good evil. Abortion advocates are portrayed as reasonable "pro-choicers," while pro-lifers are protrayed as dangerous fanatics.

My brothers and sisters, in all of this we face a challenging question: Have the followers of Christ done enough to save God's precious infants from bloodshed? Christians have the light of faith that tells them it is wrong to shed innocent blood. We know that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, and that Jesus sends us with the power of the Holy Spirit to be a light to the world, to bring justice to the nations. Yet how many Christians have grown up used to a pro-abortion society? How many have done little if anything to stop the killing? How many use weak excuses like, "I'm against abortion, but I'm not going to impose my morality on others"; this is like saying, "I won't kill babies, but if others want to, that's their business." How many are even afraid to be called "pro-life"?

It is time to stop making excuses. It is time to stop believing false media propaganda. It is time to stop being afraid of what others will think if we stand up for what is right. It is time to challenge the status quo when the blood of innocents is crying to heaven for justice. It is time to put our faith into action. It is time to be resolutely pro-life, both in private and in public. In the words of our archdiocesan *Prayer for Reverence for Life*, it is time to "defend and promote" life. In the words of today's Gospel, it is time to pick up our cross daily, the cross of Jesus, the cross that conquers sin and death with fullness of life and undying love.

We live in a pro-abortion society. It does not have to be that way. Our society rightly has condemned the Jewish Holocaust. So, too, it can and must condemn the wanton killing of our youngest children. Pregnancy is not a disease but a high calling; a child is not a problem to be eliminated, but a gift always to be treasured. As we prepare for the Great Jubilee Year 2000, let us go forth in faith and determination to renew our society with a pro-life spirit.

Avoid the 'guilt of remaining silent'

The Christian Reformed Church synod's decision to "urge the churches to continue to boldly proclaim the CRC's opposition to the North American atrocity of abortion and thus avoid the guilt of remaining silent" has important implications. It requires *integral* responses, including sensitive ministries that bring healing and hope and political initiatives that are legitimate steps towards justice for voiceless children and vulnerable parents.

We must aim for laws and policies that recognize the human right to life before and after birth.

Synod rightly urges us "to encourage governmental agencies to support programs that will address the needs of such people." One effective way of challenging governments to exercise their life-supporting responsibilities is for congregations and classes to meet with politicians to (1) explain our biblical commitment to life and justice; and (2) advocate equitable programs in support of needy families.

Such Christian non-partisan advocacy is persuasive when we support community services and public policies that promote the common good, especially the well-being of defenseless citizens who suffer because of persistent gender discrimination and spreading poverty.

Indeed, we must "avoid the guilt of remaining silent." In faith we can all pray and work for justice for all God's creatures.

Gerald Vandezande
Agincourt, Ont.

The happy vacationers

Marten A. Mol

There was a certain husband and wife in southern Ontario whose family said, "Blessings, dear father and mother. Behold, the summer months are upon us. Let us get away from it all and visit our favorite lake for a vacation." This saying pleased the father and mother greatly, and so the family gathered together all their necessities and made their way unto the water's edge. There they enjoyed the outdoors immensely.

And it came to pass that on Saturday evening the eldest son and daughter said, "Verily, this is the life; no school, no work and tomorrow no getting up for the journey to church!" But the father said unto them: "My children, though we wander and enjoy things away from our home, we must not wander from God. Could it be that worship and being in communion with the saints is an important thing to do while on vacation? Should the pleasures of summer make us careless about spiritual things.?"

And so it came to pass that this family went to church as had been their weekly custom. There, in God's house, their spirits were drawn heavenward. The hymns, the prayers, the Word of God, the fellowship of believers, all combined to strengthen them for continually joyous and holy living. They returned to their campsite rejoicing in the Lord, giving thanks for all God's gifts.

And lo, the wife said, "My dear husband, I perceive that thou art a wise man to heed the Scripture which exhorts us to forsake not assembling of ourselves together, even while resting on vacation. The enemy of our souls is near and would have us become careless. We must continually resist him."

And so the happy vacationers continued their camp-out, mindful of the Source of EVERY blessing. Each day they observed family devotions and each weekend they remembered the Lord's day to keep it holy. Neither did their home church suffer financially by their absence; for they had given tithes and offerings before departing.

And so the Lord's work at home and abroad continued. The happy vacationers returned home, rested and pleased because nothing had marred their holiday enjoyment.

Marten Mol lives in Aurora, Ont.

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Calvin grads teach in Japan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Four recent Calvin College graduates — two Canadians and two Americans — set off on July 25 for a year of teaching in Japan. The four, Tim Veltman of Burlington, Ont., Dan Sybenga of Chatham, Ont., Zoe Wilson of Grand Rapids, Mich., and Sarah Rinsema of Pella, Iowa, joined five other Calvin graduates already taking part in the prestigious JET program, run by the Japanese government to bring English into Japanese schools.

JET — Japanese Exchange and Teaching — is part of a special program instituted by the Japanese government in 1986 to bring native speakers of English who are recent college graduates to Japan to teach English in junior high schools and high schools.

'Highly selective'

"The program," says Calvin professor of Japanese and Chinese Larry Herzberg, " is an attempt to internationalize the curriculum of Japanese schools, improve the English skills of their students and promote better intercultural understanding."

Herzberg says hiring for the program is "highly selective" and draws on young people from English-speaking countries all over the world. Only around one in 10 applicants are accepted — on the basis of academic record, recommendations and personal interviews at the various foreign consulates.

The positions pay $30,000 (US) for part-time teaching and are renewable for up to three years. Since all of the Calvin College graduates in the program have renewed their contracts, this academic year there will be nine former Calvin students teaching under the program.

Herzberg notes that the nine are "scattered all over Japan and are helping to foster good will toward North Americans, and an increased interest in Christianity as well. Almost all ... studied Japanese language with me here at Calvin, which both aroused their interest in that country and its people and prepared them for this important venture. I am very proud of these young people.

Calvin College offers a Japanese studies minor and is considering a minor in Chinese studies.

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Killing us softly?

Pedagogeries

Alyce Oosterhuis

The Edmonton Society for Christian Education could potentially be facing another threat to its existence as an independent school with three campuses for grades K-12. Ironically, the potential threat is cloaked in the language of pluralistic tolerance, expanding openness, financial freedom and public justice.

As the board takes careful steps to explore the ramifications of becoming an alternative system under the umbrella of the Edmonton public schools, society members are cautiously encouraging and/or eagerly applauding. What has changed so it now seems possible to have Christian public schools in Alberta?

Last year, a private member's legislative bill proposed that the province of Alberta increase its funding of children in independent schools to cover the instructional costs of $4,000-plus rather than the existing 50 per cent of that amount.

This bill resulted in the appointment of a task force to advise the government. After consulting with many interest groups throughout the province, who varied in their demands from no funding to total funding, the task force advised the government to increase its funding to 60 per cent over the next two years. The independent schools appeared to celebrate the increase, and Gary Duthler, the executive director of the Alberta Independent School Association, who had been a member of this task force, was inundated with flowers and thank yous.

The Alberta Minister of Education expressed a wish for cookies rather than flowers after his office began to look like a permanent birthday party. This all happened four months ago.

Not content

Now it seems that some of the independent schools are not as content with the 60 per cent of instructional costs as they first appeared to be. With expansive building plans and budget deficits, several schools began to explore the alternative school status allowed in the Alberta School Act since 1988.

According to Article 16(1), an "alternative program means an education program that emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion or subject-matter, or uses a particular teaching philosophy, but that is not a special education program or a program of religious education offered by a separate [Catholic] school board."

Until 1996, the Edmonton public school board had a specific policy which disallowed an alternative program for religious reasons under its jurisdiction. That policy was rescinded to allow for the Logos (Christian) program established on various public school campuses in 1996. At that time the Edmonton public school board and its superintendent were adamant about not favoring a segregated Logos program in a self-contained school building. Logos children need to be interacting with other public school children — French immersion classes; behavior disordered children; neighborhood public school children.

In his presentation to the task force, the superintendent described independent schools as "religious ghettos." Yet now, several of these independent "religious ghettos" are finding a favorable response to their overtures to be fully funded and maintained as separate Christian school campuses under the public school umbrella!

Serious questions

If the three neighboring Christian schools are successful in their bid for alternative status, their inevitable substantial reduction in tuition fees could have an impact on the Edmonton Society for Christian Education's subsequent enrolment.

Rhetorical questions like the following are being addressed at different levels:

* Why pay $5000-plus for tuition when quality Christian education is available in the neighborhood for less than $1000?

* Why not make Christian education attractive to everyone and thereby be a leavening, evangelizing influence in society?

* Why not have the teachers join the Alberta Teachers' Association and contribute their Christian understandings and principles to the public debates?

* Why not have a broader forum for the Christian curriculum products that are now only seen at Christian teachers' conventions?

On June 29, the board of the Edmonton society organized a meeting to solicit grassroots responses to the issues confronting it in the exploration of alternative status. The community response was overwhelming in the numbers and in the wisdom expressed by many.

Moving slowly and carefully

Their "bottom lines" for any contractual agreement involve societal control and visionary perpetuity. Principal and teacher appointments as well as curriculum alternatives need to be maintained within the jurisdiction of the society and its board.

The society needs to be continuously informed as to the status of negotiations; *go slowly and carefully*; and, if we should ever become an alternative school, recognize that there will be little chance of returning to an independent status five or 10 years from now.

How binding are the public school/alternative school contracts if and when there is a change of trustees, superintendent, or societal acceptance of religious schools? Will the umbrella of tolerance eventually stifle the alternatives? Are we being set up for a soft and slow kill?

We certainly live in interesting times.

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis has been very involved with the Edmonton Society for Christian Education in the last 20 years. She teaches educational psychology at The King's University College in Edmonton.

Film Review

An old fashioned swashbuckler sets audiences cheering

Marian Van Til

The Mask of Zorro

Rated AA. Stars Antonio Banderas, Anthony Hopkins, Catherine Zeta-Jones. Written by John Escow, Ted Elliott, Terry Rossio and Randall Jahnson. Directed by Martin Campbell.

Opening scene: it is 1821. The Santa Ana-led Mexican rebellion against Spain — whose tyranny is embodied by grasping, affluent noblemen who have increased their wealth on the backs of the Mexican peasants — has spread to California, which is still part of Spanish territory. (Mexico wins independence from Spain a year later, and California doesn't become a part of the United States until 1850, after the U.S. and Mexico go to war in 1848.)

In a large public square, the Spain-appointed governor, Don Rafael Montero (Stuart Wilson), has plucked three peasants out of the murmuring crowd and is about to have them executed. Time is running out. Yet some dare to express hope against hope that Zorro will appear to save the men. And at the last second — he does!

Clad in black, a sash-like mask covering his eyes and upper face, he gallops in on his magnificent dark steed, Tornado, and, using all the skilled swordsmanship and fancy whip work for which he is famous, makes short work of the governors' marksmen and swordsmen, to the delight and cheers of the peasants.

Who is this man, champion of the underdog, friend of the poor, defender of the innocent? Only a few know his true identity. He is Don Diego de la Vega (Anthony Hopkins), a Mexican nobleman who sympathizes with the peasant cause and rights injustices against them.

Soon after, Don Montero finally catches up with Zorro/de la Vega, wreaks vengeance on de la Vega's family, and throws the man himself into a wretched dungeon.

A new era

Twenty years pass, and de la Vega finally finds a way out. The need for Zorro's justice is still acute. Upon learning that Montero has returned to Mexico from Spain with a plan which will once again wreak havoc with the people, de la Vega realizes that the man must be stopped; and he and Montero have personal accounts to settle.

But de la Vega knows his age is now against him. Through an interesting and plausible coincidence, a boy who, with his brother, had helped Zorro in that public square those 20 years ago, becomes a pupil of the master. The boy, Alejandro Murieta, now a handsome, if headstrong and slightly arrogant man of about 30 (Antonio Banderas), will be groomed to be the new Zorro.

Murieta figures that all that is needed to do Zorro's job is zeal. But his over-confident swaggering and ineptness with his horse immediately get him into trouble, which the film presents with great humor.

Murieta wants to blow away the bad guys. But Zorro/de la Vega prefers to embarrass and disable them. He is brave, gallant and witty, far from the initially bumbling, overly eager, sock-it-to-'em Murieta.

De la Vega's grace and discernment are a long time in coming to Murieta, but gradually the latter becomes sharp and wise enough to take on the mantle of Zorro.

Surprising origin

The Zorro legend seems to have been around for so long, and has seen so many incarnations in movies, television, books and comic books, that one might assume the story of this mysterious man of dual identity — adventurous, black-masked defender of the downtrodden and quiet-living nobleman with beloved wife and family — is based on at least partly true tales passed down over decades of Mexican culture.

Not so. The captivating figure of Zorro (Spanish for "fox"), was a product of the mind of a Chicago-area police writer early in the century. In 1919, Johnston McCulley introduced Zorro in his pulp fiction story "The Curse of the Capistrano." It was the first of some 70 Zorro tales McCulley wrote over three decades until 1950.

Compelling danger

If McCulley's writing wasn't great literature, his adept characterization of this mysterious, dangerous, yet principled do-gooder struck an instant chord with readers, and later, with TV watchers and filmgoers. (Among others, Zorro has been portrayed by Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.: *The Mark of Zorro*; Tyrone Power: *The Mark of Zorro* remake; Guy Williams: Disney's "Zorro" TV series; Alain Delon: *Zorro*; and Frank Langella: TV remake of *The Mark of Zorro*.)

McCulley based Zorro/Diego de la Vega on a combination of characters: the famous fictitious Scarlet Pimpernel; the real-life Joaquin Murieta (a vigilante who fought gold-rushers who took over Mexican settlements); Salom on Maria Simeon Pico (part Robin Hood, part highwayman); and Jose Maria Avila, a passionate Mexican revolutionary/renegade.

Tongue firmly in cheek

Part of the fun of this film is that it doesn't take itself, or even the famous Zorro, seriously. One man couldn't possibly overcome the odds that Zorro overcomes and live to tell about it for five minutes, much less for years; the film knows it, we know it; but it doesn't matter — the film winkingly makes it *look* like he could, and we play along, willingly suspending disbelief for two hours.

The Mask of Zorro is old-fashioned, swashbuckling good fun, and its tongue-in-cheek attitude has us laughing often. Of course, it doesn't expect us to raise any troubling historical questions, or queries about the legitimacy of vigilante justice, revolution or even colonialism — and we don't (at least, not while we're watching).

Zorro presents a picturesque, morally black and white world in which good wins over evil, and rather handily. Perhaps that's a major reason this film is so appealing *now*, to audiences whose daily lives trudge through a society full of moral ambiguity and chaos.

The excellent acting further ensures the film's success. Hopkins is in his usual fine form, this picture letting him don a number of disguises and play men of vastly different ages and social stations.

Antonio Banderas, himself a Spaniard, infuses the younger Zorro with a verve and humor which translates into screen magnetism.

Catherine Zeta-Jones (Welsh, like Hopkins), looks appropriately Latin as Zorro's daughter Elena. She, too, invests her character not only with charm, but strength and a welcome, active physicality. And finally, the northern Mexico locations, along with the rich set dressings, convincingly convey the early 19th century California setting.

CCM names top 100 albums

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) — *CCM* magazine, celebrating its 20th anniversary with a special July issue, contacted music critics and radio programmers, asking them to name their favorite albums. The result was a list of the top 100 Christian albums. Here is the cream of that crop:

10. "With Footnotes," by Second Chapter of Acts (Word, 1975). Praised as "one of the first true Christian pop albums."

9. "Jars of Clay," by Jars of Clay (Essential/ Silvertone, 1995). "Rock with brains and faith; ...smart, relevant and good for the soul."

8. "The Turning," by Leslie (Sam) Phillips (Myrrh, 1987). "Phillips' swan song remains incisive and penetrating...."

7. "Slow Train Coming," by Bob Dylan (Columbia, 1979). "Pop music's legendary poet laureate made a huge impact on music with an album full of universal truths passionately intoned in his gravel-throated, nasal-harmonic manner."

6. "A Liturgy, a Legacy and a Ragamuffin Band," by Rich Mullins (Reunion, 1993). "It is Mullins' magnum opus, the one we'll always remember."

5. "Jesus Freak," by dc Talk (ForeFront, 1995). "This album ushered in Christian music's modern rock era."

4. "For Him Who Has Ears to Hear," by Keith Green (Sparrow, 1977). "Christian music has produced a few visionaries; Keith Green must be considered one."

3. "Age to Age," by Amy Grant (Myrrh, 1982). "Christian music's first platinum album..., at once reverent and playful, insightful and kind, joyful and reflective."

2. "Only Visiting This Planet," by Larry Norman (MGM/ Verve,1972). "A Christian speaking his mind intelligently and poetically within a rock music form that transformed a generation to follow."

1. "Lead Me On," by Amy Grant (A&M/Myrrh, 1988). "Truly excellent, standing the test of time and transcending the shallow waters of pop music with a profoundly universal appeal."

Church

New visa system threat to Catholics in Russia

Tatiana Titova

MOSCOW (KNS) — The Russian government is adopting a new visa system which threatens to make it impossible for the Roman Catholic Church to maintain the supply of priests needed for normal parish life.

The new rules, which according to Moscow's Institute of Religion and Law have already been sent to government offices such as Russian consulates abroad, classify visa applications according to the "goals of a visit." The categories numbered 54, 55 and 56 — "religious affairs," "charitable" and "humanitarian" — allow visas only for three-month periods. Unlike foreign athletes or businesspeople, foreigners in those three categories are not given the right to extend their stays in Russia or to apply for multiple-entry visas.

The Catholic Church in Russia is especially dependent on clergy who are not Russian nationals, since until the early 1990s it was impossible for a young man aspiring to the priesthood to obtain a Catholic seminary education within the borders of what is now the Russian Federation. The Catholics expect that most of their priests in Russia will have to be foreign nationals for at least another generation, until their newly reopened seminary in St. Petersburg can fill the void.

Church could lose many priests

The new rules' category for "religious affairs" is defined broadly: "Foreigners present for religious affairs, for negotiations with religious organizations, and also with the goal of missionary activity, pilgrimages, service in religious organizations or the like."

Father Antoni Gei of the Catholics' apostolic administration in Moscow told Keston News Service on July 14 that two nuns, one from Poland and one from Slovakia, have already been denied visa renewals on the basis of the new regulations.

According to Yekaterina Smyslova of the Institute of Religion and Law, if the new rules are strictly applied, "the Catholic Church in Russia is going to lose many of its clergy — not all parishes or orders can afford to pay for repeated trips abroad to apply for new visas. Could Mother Teresa have become a saint if she had been forced to return from Calcutta to her native Albania every three months?"

Smyslova also noted that just as Russia is enduring an economic crisis and "the government cannot even pay pensions or guarantee a minimum standard of living, its ministries are creating artificial barriers to humanitarian aid and charitable activities."

Reformed Church retains 'conscience clause' re: ordaining women

HOLLAND, Mich. (REC) — The Reformed Church in America (RCA) will continue to allow women to be ordained "irregularly" to the ministry of the Word and sacraments. Those who oppose ordaining women will continue to be recognized in a "conscience clause" that protects their right of opposition. The 1998 RCA synod turned down a request to clarify the situation.

The RCA approved the ordination of women as deacons and elders in 1971, and made decisions in 1973 and 1979 allowing the "irregular" ordination of women as ministers. The church did not reverse that decision later; instead, in 1980 and 81 it approved a conscience clause. Thus, RCA members have the right to conscientiously oppose women being ordained provided they "not obstruct the classis in fulfilling its responsibility to arrange for the care, ordination and installation of woman candidates and ministers."

Women deserve respect

The RCA's Theology Commission asked Synod 1998 to regularize matters, to make explicit what is implicit in the conscience clause. Women ministers at the synod strongly supported the appeal, saying they deserve the respect of all churches in their regions.

Others said changing the status quo would drive some people out of the denomination. They cited dissension in the Christian Reformed Church and in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) over this issue.

The synod defeated the request by a voice vote, and the conscience clause stands.

Praying together helps sex life

ATLANTA, Ga. (EP) — The old saying "the family that prays together, stays together" has a new meaning, according to the recently released Georgia Marriage Report. The study found that 61 per cent of couples who pray together rate their sexual relationship as a nine or 10 on a scale of one to 10; only 38 per cent of couples who never pray together say they are that satisfied.

Randy Hicks, executive director of the Georgia Family Council, which produced the report, said, "Prayer is a very intimate thing ... there seems to be better communication among religious couples, which allows them to overcome the bad times."

Communion wine is sacrilege, says Hindu government in Delhi

Chandran Paul Martin

NAGPUR, India, (ENI) — The government of the Delhi union territory, led by the Hindu fundamentalist party, the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), is considering removing Christian churches from the official list of places of worship.

Rajendra Gupta, Excise Minister of the Delhi government, has recommended the cancellation of the churches' official status and has received a nod from the Chief Minister of Delhi, Saheb Singh Verma.

The union territory of Delhi, which includes India's second-biggest city, has a population of about 12 million, among them about 100,000 Christians, from the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of North India, the Salvation Army, Assemblies of God, Mar Thoma Church and the Methodist, Lutheran, Orthodox and Baptist churches.

According to Gupta, drinking wine in religious places is tantamount to sacrilege. The issue was brought to Gupta's attention when the Roman Catholic Church applied for a permit to buy 20,000 litres of wine from Goa. An excise licence is required for bulk purchase of wine. But according to the excise regulations, liquor outlets are not permitted within 75 metres of a place of worship, including temples, churches and mosques.

Westminster Abbey honors modern martyrs

LONDON, England (EP) — Statues of 20th century Christian martyrs were unveiled at London's Westminster Abbey July 9. Among them are German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Russian Grand Duchess Elisabeth, American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Chinese evangelist Wang Zhiming, and Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum of Uganda. The statues were unveiled at a special ceremony featuring Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip and Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey.

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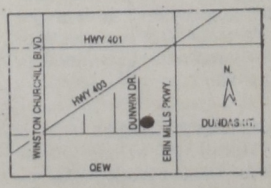

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What's in a (biblical) name

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
● Al Wolters

"On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, 'No! He is to be called John.'" (Luke 1:59-60, NIV)

Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptizer, had good reason for insisting that her newborn son should be called John. The angel Gabriel, when he had first announced the birth of the child to her husband, Zechariah, had explicitly given this command (Luke 1:13). That was also the reason why the temporarily dumb Zechariah wrote on a tablet, "His name is John" (verse 63).

To us the name John does not mean very much. It is a common name in English, and some of the associations it has come to have are crude: for example, as a common noun it can mean toilet or a prostitute's customer. But in the Bible the name had much nobler connotations, because John is the equivalent of the Hebrew name Johanan, meaning "the Lord has been gracious." The name which Elizabeth and Zechariah gave to the son of their old age was, besides a name, a confession of faith.

Bearing God's name

This was the common practice in biblical times. Most names in the Bible are really a short sentence, consisting of a divine name and a verbal form. Such names are technically called "theophoric" (literally "God-bearing"), because they include the name of the God or god whom the name-givers worshipped.

This divine name may come at either the beginning or the end of the name of the person. Thus the name Elnathan means "God has given," as does the name Nathan(a)el. Other names with the theophoric element *El* (God) are Elihu ("He is my God"), Daniel ("God has judged"), and Michael ("Who is like God?").

But the most common theophoric element in biblical names are abbreviations of the name Yahweh (formerly written Jahweh or Jehovah), the special covenantal name which God revealed to Moses at the burning bush (see Exodus 3).

At the beginning of a name, this element shows up in the form "Jeho-" or "Jo-," as in Jehoshaphat ("Yahweh has judged") and Jonathan "Yahweh has given"). At the end of a name this divine name becomes *-jah,* as in Adonijah ("Yahweh is my lord") and *-iah,* as in Zechariah ("Yahweh has remembered").

(The confusing variation in spelling is largely explained by the fact that the I, J and Y of our English Bibles all represent the same Hebrew letter, originally pronounced like the Y in "yet.")

It is a testimony to the religious devotion of many Israelites that so many of their names included a form of Yahweh, the one true God of biblical religion. Think of such well-known biblical names as Hezekiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jehoiakim, Josiah, Joshua.

'Baal' becomes 'shame'

Occasionally, we also find Israelite names with the element *baal,* which means "master" or "lord" in Hebrew. An example is Bealiah (= Baaliah) in 1 Chronicles 12:5, which means "Yahweh is lord." But because Baal was also the name of a pagan god, these names are very rare in Israel, though they are common in the surrounding nations. In fact, the names of Israelites which contained the word *baal* were sometimes changed by substituting the word *bosheth,* which means "shame" or "shameful thing." That is why Jonathan's son is called Mephibosheth in 2nd Samuel 9 and elsewhere. Originally, his name ended in *-baal.*

Same steadfast God

It is a pity that the meaning of these biblical names, which would have been immediately apparent to the ancient Hebrews, is no longer clear in English translation.

Matters are obscured even further by the way Old Testament names were transliterated into Greek, so that the New Testament name Jesus no longer resembles its Hebrew original Joshua, meaning "Yahweh saves."

Nevertheless it is true that the New Testament name of the Messiah, as well as that of the forerunner who announced his imminent arrival, clearly indicate that the God of Jesus and John is the Yahweh of the Old Testament, and that he comes to his people with a message of salvation by grace.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ontario. His given first name is Albert, which means "illustrious through nobility."

Christian prisoners are released in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (EP) — At least five Christian prisoners were released in Saudi Arabia in mid-July, with the release of at least eight more expected shortly.

Dutch national Wim den Hartog and Filipinos Gali Afurong, Reuben Aguirre, Angelito Hizon and Ariel Ordona have been released and have left the country.

U.S. government officials met with Saudi Prince Abdul Aziz, who visited the U.S. in mid-July to preside at the dedication of a mosque named for his father, King Fahd. U.S. Senators reportedly pointed out the irony of Aziz coming to the U.S. to dedicate a religious structure while Christians in his homeland were being arrested and tortured for their beliefs. Aziz reportedly provided assurances that all Christians being held in Saudi Arabia will be released.

Saudi authorities have also promised to return the confiscated passport of Yolanda Aguilar, allowing her to return to the Philippines with her month-old baby daughter. After Aguilar's husband fled Saudi Arabia in June to avoid arrest, officials detained and interrogated his pregnant wife, who gave birth during the ordeal.

Tortured for information

A spokesperson for the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines told Agence France Press that some of the prisoners were tortured for names of other Filipinos in Riyadh who practiced the Christian faith. The Vatican news service Fides reported that one Filipino prisoner, Gaudencio Lorenzo, had been physically tortured during 14 days of interrogation, and forced to "convert" to Islam before being released.

Saudi officials detained the Christians for distributing Christian leaflets, sharing their faith or meeting in homes for prayer and Bible study. The prisoners were denied access to embassy officials from their homelands. Saudi Arabia is an officially Muslim nation; preaching the Christian faith is punishable by a year in prison or deportation.

No monitors

According to the U.S. State Department's 1997 Human Rights Report on Saudi Arabia, "The government does not permit visits by international human rights groups or independent monitors, nor has it fully acceded to all major international human rights treaties and conventions.

"The government disagrees with internationally accepted definitions of human rights and views its interpretation of Islamic law as the only necessary guide to protect human rights. The government generally ignores, or condemns as attacks on Islam, citations of Saudi human rights abuses by international monitors or foreign governments."

Wycliffe translators aid Colombian government's human rights fight

BOGOTA, Colombia (EP) — Bible translators in Colombia have been asked to help the government in the struggle for human rights. Members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), the translation arm of Wycliffe, are helping the Defensoria del Pueblo, a government agency that helps guard human rights in Colombia, prepare materials in the everyday language of indigenous Colombians.

The materials will explain basic human rights, and tell indigenous people how to get government help if their rights are violated. Paul Frank, SIL Colombia's director, says, "It is exciting to be able to respond to a direct request for our help in an area that is right down our alley — preparing materials in the vernacular languages for the use of the indigenous communities."

Voortman

Over 40 Varieties of Fine Cookies

A light to India:

The remarkable story of a Canadian woman's love for the people of India. But first she had to sacrifice her own love for a Canadian flyer.

Dan Wooding

Lillian Doerksen faced an agonizing decision while still a student at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) back in 1947. This young Canadian woman was in love with Lloyd, a handsome six-footer in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He was about to pay her a visit from Vancouver to propose marriage to her. But Lillian knew that God had called her to be a missionary to India and she wasn't sure that Lloyd had received that same call.

During Lloyd's visit, Lillian planned to tell him how she believed she was to move to India to work at the Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission in Kedgoan, in the state of Maharashtra.

"I had been told by a friend at BIOLA that the 'Mukti' ('salvation') Mission had over 800 orphans in its care. It had been founded before the turn of the century by Pandita Ramabai, an Indian Hindu woman who had converted to Christianity. She became a reformer and a wonderful 'mother' to thousands of starving, destitute girls, child widows, and young women whom she rescued and took into her Home of Salvation, founded in 1868," said Lillian.

Sadly, the visit with Lloyd turned out as she had expected; he told her that he did not feel a call to the mission field and, on top of that, he had a widowed mother to take care of in Toronto.

So in September 1950, Lillian Doerksen left for India by herself and began an adventure that even she could not have predicted. For during her 36 years with the Mukti Mission, as a true "Light to India," she was given another family to look after.

'Sanctify my smeller'

Even before she could travel to Mukti from Bombay, where she landed after a long sea voyage, she discovered that the spicy smells of Indian food made her nauseous. Standing in a market in Bombay, she pleaded with God to "sanctify my smeller." If her prayer weren't answered she feared she would have to go back on the same ship to Canada.

But "right there, God took my sense of smell away," Lillian said. "To this day, I can smell nothing bad or pleasant. But I can taste! What a miracle!"

Years after she arrived in the second most populous nation on earth (now with 900 million people), she was able to "start her own family." Lillian explained, "The mission decided to split the girls into families and give each family the name of a flower. Mine were called the Honeysuckle Family, and I was about to become a mother to 34 girls whom I called my Honeysuckle Wonders."

'Our lotus blossom'

In Lillian's book *A Light To India* (WinePress Publishing), she describes how one of the girls became a help to her family: *Kamal, one of our Mukti girls preparing for service, was a real help with the children. She would care for them when I had to be away, and loved them dearly. She had the promise of a valuable worker, and became very close to me, for she longed for a mother's love. I felt for her, especially when I remembered her story.*

At one time our Bible women had gone to a well-known temple where thousands gathered for their Hindu religious festivals. While witnessing about Jesus near the temple, they saw a woman dart in and leave her little baby as a sacrifice to the gods. The Bible women were shocked and ran after the mother and told her not to leave the child, but she said she had to. They quickly told her about Mukti, where little children were taken in and loved and cared for, and asked her if they could take [the child].

"Take her," she cried as she ran away.

The baby was brought to the mission and cared for with love and given the name Kamal (Lotus). She blossomed into a bright little girl with a beautiful singing voice and a desire to serve. When she finished high school and then seminary training, she felt called to give her life to missionary service in her home — Mukti.

These kinds of stories were repeated time and time again as Lillian and the other dedicated missionaries gave of their lives in the service of girls who had been orphaned or abandoned by their families.

PHOTOS COURTESY LILLIAN DOERKSEN

Lillian on the Deaf Ministry site when it was a rocky hillside. Now the MFD has a thriving Deaf Training and camp centre.

A message for the Dalai Lama

Lillian recalls the time she was in the Buddhist holy city of Benares with fellow missionaries. They discovered that the Dalai Lama was visiting a temple there. The three women — Lillian; Olive Dowsett, general secretary of the mission in New Zealand; and Gladys Fletcher, the Mukti superintendent — spoke with a lama outside the temple. He then went inside to inform the group that three Western women were outside. The man returned a few minutes later and they were surprised when he said in Hindi,"His Holiness would like to see you. You may have a three-minute interview with his Holiness."

"In a state of shock, we followed the lama into the temple, and we saw the Dalai Lama sitting cross-legged on a mat on the floor. After some small talk, he said, 'What message do you have for me?'

"We had not expected such a comment. After explaining who we were, I said, 'Your Holiness, the message we have for you is that our God loves you, and so do we. We serve this great God and his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.'"

The Dalai Lama listened as Lillian talked of the Savior, and as Olive explained that she regularly held a prayer meeting in her home in New Zealand and they frequently prayed for him and the Tibetan people.

Lillian said she realized that our three minutes were now up, so she said, "Your Holiness, would you mind if we had a word of prayer to our God for you."

"Oh, please do," he said.

So she closed her eyes and began asking the Lord to bless this man and his people. "With that, we knew it was time for us to leave and we stood to our feet," said Lillian. "We were not prepared for what happened next, as the Dalai Lama followed us outside. As soon as he appeared, like a streak of lightening, all of those hundreds of Tibetan pilgrims waiting outside fell flat to the ground, showing their deep devotion to the one they believe to be god. Then, as the car began to move away, they rose to their feet and began throwing marigolds in front of it. The Dalai Lama bowed and smiled through the window. The three of us had to pinch ourselves about what had just occurred."

Lillian Doerksen

Time to retire?

On March 17, 1987, Lillian Doerksen found it time to retire from her 36 fulfilling years as a missionary at Mukti. At age 66, her health was declining and she struggled with what she should now do. Should she return to Canada and live out her remaining years with her wonderful memories? Or should she stay in her beloved India, but become involved in a new kind of ministry?

Just days before she was due to retire, she was reading her Bible in her sitting room at Mukti when she received her second "call" to India. Through a sheen of tears, she read in Isaiah: "Bring out the deaf who have ears but cannot hear.... You are my witnesses.... I will work and who will reverse it? Behold I do a new thing" (KJV).

Said Lillian, "I had been aware that there was no Christian ministry to the deaf of any kind in our whole state of 90 million people. The Lord showed me his heart for the deaf and he gave me a heart that wanted to share that burden."

> I had been aware that there was no Christian ministry to the deaf of any kind in our whole state of 90 million people.

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Are you afraid of Muslims and Buddhists?

An opportunity to witness to world religions in your own city

Jan Johnson

As Terry, a real estate agent, met the church's guest missionary at the airport, the man asked Terry about southeast Asian refugees in the area. Terry cut loose — the influx of refugees was adversely affecting his work. After sympathizing with Terry, the missionary said, "These refugees come from countries closed to missionaries. When they come here, it helps North Americans obey the Great Commission. What will we do with this historic opportunity?"

Kingdom values are radically different from common values. For the Christian, hearing that over 10,000 Vietnamese (mostly Buddhist) live on the north side of Chicago, and that Muslim Kurds have settlements in Dallas, Los Angeles, Vancouver, San Diego, Toronto and New York is exciting. It gets us praying about open doors: Is the Asian engineer you know at work a Buddhist? Is the Middle Eastern man who owns the dry cleaners a Muslim? Is the Indian family at school Hindu? If so, what do you say? Where do you start? Witnessing to people of these faiths is different from talking to the guy at work who went to Sunday school as a kid.

Christians who have stepped out in this way have found that the following approaches help.

Make friends

Pat Kammert, a quiet Christian woman, accidentally made friends with several Buddhists when her husband died from brain cancer. It started when Miriam, an accountant at the gas station she frequented, invited Pat to go to human potential seminars. Pat didn't like the seminars, but they provided company.

"One night on the way home, Miriam said, 'I want to know this Jesus you know.' I had never witnessed to her!" says Pat. Miriam accepted Christ and she and Pat led Miriam's Buddhist husband, Kiet, to the Lord.

Pat continued to go to the seminars with Miriam and at the breaks, Miriam's Vietnamese friends asked Pat questions about Christianity. They wanted to know how she survived the death of her husband (the thing they most feared) and she told them: her strength came from Jesus Christ. So many Buddhists accepted Christ that Pat started a Bible study for them.

When I asked God how I could reach them, the phrase 'Go back,' kept coming to my mind.

Establishing a relationship is foundational. "You break a lot of bread," says Pat. "They have to know you. You don't give a Bible lesson and leave." It's more effective to introduce the gospel through friendship than intellectual discussions because religion is more personal than intellectual for other nationalities. It's more effective to offer to pray for someone than to argue theology."

Ask questions

Some people think that discussions about politics and religion start arguments, but it doesn't have to be that way. Once the relationship is built, you can ask questions such as: What is the most common religion in your country? How would you describe your purpose in life? Then they'll ask questions about your religion.

Be informed

If you know the basics about another faith, you can begin with central issues the other person cares about. For example, says Premkumar Dhamaraj of the India Center for Missions, people begin conversations with Hindus by saying, Jesus died for you, but that contradicts what Hindus believe about karma. "Hindus believe that even God can't change karma (karma means that you reap what you sow)," says Premkumar. "It's better to start by agreeing with karma — people feel the consequences of their actions.

Then go on: But for the Hindu, that means hopelessly trying reincarnated lives. So you ask when they'll get out of that cycle. Does the God who created us want us to follow that cycle in hopelessness? No, he has united organically with humanity by being born and dying on a cross. Jesus takes our karma (consequences) for us. When you begin with what Hindus believe, you can show them that Jesus addresses a question they care about."

Be alert for cultural misinformation

Other nations get their information about Americans from

...continued on p. 12

A light to India

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With the help of two Christian workers, Arvind and Tara (one of her "daughters"), she was able to establish the Maharashtra Fellowship for the Deaf, which now has schools, homes and other fine facilities for the deaf all over the state. It also runs camps for deaf young people and deaf couples.

What happened to Lloyd?

Lloyd eventually married a girl named Grace, and during Lillian's first furlough back in Canada, she was able to meet them. Soon, the pair became her most enthusiastic supporters. But there was a tense moment during one meeting, revealed Lillian.

"During one meeting in the Toronto area, when I had to answer questions from the audience, I was asked about my 'call' to the mission field," she said. "I had to be very tactful in how I explained it, but I did briefly mention how I had given up marriage to obey God.

"When I saw Grace shedding some tears, I felt badly about what I had said. Later I apologized to her. It was then that she told me her story. 'Lillian,' she said, 'I thoroughly understood and I thank God for the way he has led me, too. You know, I also had been engaged to a Canadian airman like Lloyd. Two months before our wedding, he was shot down over London.' I was stunned, and felt a real love towards Grace and was pleased that she had become Lloyd's wife.

"Our friendship blossomed from there on. They continued to share in my ministry through prayer, and also with gifts for my publicity department at the Mukti Mission. Our fellowship was blessed. Several years ago, I had a letter from Grace saying that she wanted me to know immediately that, two days before, Lloyd had had a massive heart attack and that he was now 'in Glory.'"

Keep piercing the darkness

As Lillian prepares to hand more of her work over to Indian nationals, she says she has one prayer for them. "It is," she says, "for them to continue to pierce the darkness there in a new and powerful way with God's message and truth."

For further information on how to get Lillian's book, or on her ministry, in the U.S. contact: George and Cindy Payton, Maharashtra Fellowship for the Deaf, PO Box 2209, Walnut, CA 91788-2209; or phone:(909) 393-1714. In Canada, write: Sig and Ruth Toews, Maharashtra Fellowship for the Deaf, 2643 Hardy Crescent, North Vancouver, BC V7H 1K3; or phone: (604) 929-4022; FAX: (604) 903-9048.

Dan Wooding is a British journalist now living in Southern California with his wife Norma. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times).

Canadian family in India experiences warm hospitality

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Adjusting to life in India was easier than adjusting to California for a young Canadian couple now living in Bangalore, India.

That's what Stiny de Jong, a nurse and member of Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines, Ont., reports about her daughter, Christina, and son-in-law Paul Lantinga. Paul works as a computer systems manager for a subsidiary of Hewlett-Packard in the southern Indian city of Bangalore.

De Jong visited her daughter and family for two weeks in June, and reports, "Indian Christian people are very warm and welcoming. They invite you to their home immediately for a meal and for tea. They're very sociable people. They don't treasure their privacy like we do. To be on their own to them is more like punishment."

STINY DE JONG PHOTOS

Stiny de Jong (centre) with Paul, Simon and Christina Lantinga.

This contrasts sharply with the Lantingas' experience working in California, just before they moved to India.

"Christina said when they lived in California, she felt very lonely because Paul was at work long days. She was at home with their one-year-old, and the neighborhood was deserted because everyone had gone to work," reports de Jong. "But in India, she has not been lonely for a minute, because there are people around all the time."

The Lantingas "have a lot of Indian friends because they chose to live in an apartment where only Indian people live, and they chose to go to a church comprised of Indians, so that they would really get a feel for the culture ," explains de Jong.

The Lantingas are spending a year in Bangalore. In September, they will return to Canada to work in Toronto. De Jong had never expected to travel to India but says her daughter and son-in-law "were really anxious for their parents to experience what they've experienced."

Much beyond poverty

"India was a country that I wouldn't care to visit because I thought there's so much poverty there, it's going to stay with me for the rest of my life."

But because her daughter was living there, de Jong started reading up about India and developed a greater interest in the country.

While in Bangalore, de Jong went to an Indian church with her daughter's family. "We went to a Full Gospel church called Hope Chapel," she recalls. "There were 50 people and we were the only Westerners. It was a marvelous service, led that day by a group of Africans."

Although only about two per cent of Indians are Christians, de Jong says there is a high number of Christians in Bangalore, and many churches.

De Jong says the Lantingas report some conflicts between Christians and members of other religions, but these are not usually overt.

One Indian man de Jong spoke to said he had attended a Bible college which sent a group of 40 young men on bicycles to a nearby village. There, they shared their faith through drama. But "the whole village got riled up and started attacking them. They wrecked their bikes, so they all had to flee the village on foot."

Once the students escaped, they went straight to the college chapel to pray for the villagers. "Together, they resolved to pray for a change of heart. Much to their surprise, three months later, a delegation came from that village with 40 repaired and restored bicycles and an apology and a request: 'We do want to know more about this God.'"

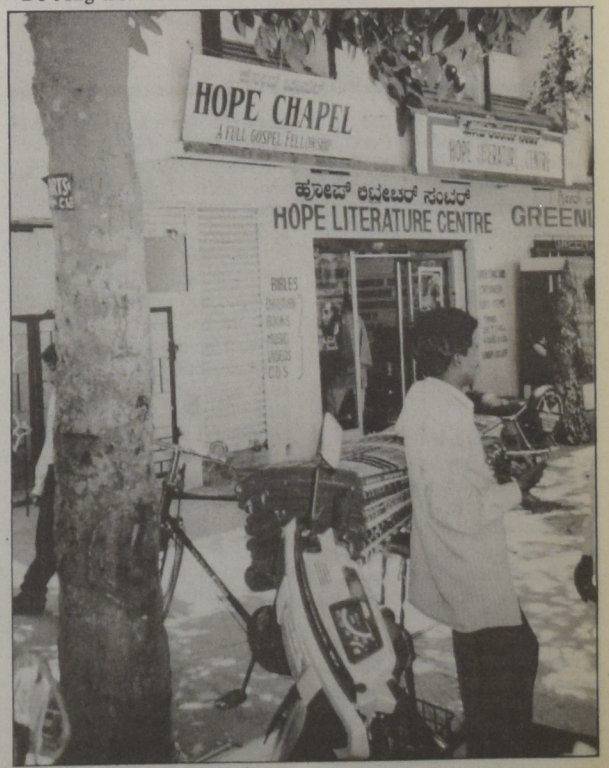
Fatalistic outlook

The Lantingas told de Jong, "As long as Hinduism reigns, there's not much hope for this country, because of the nature of the religion. It's a fatalistic outlook, thinking, 'This is what the gods want for us ... and perhaps in the reincarnation there'll be something better."

De Jong also heard bad news about the dowry system and its effect on Indian society. "The dowry system has been declared illegal, but nobody pays any attention," she says. "I talked to many educated Indians, and no matter how poor people are, they will try to get those 200,000 rupees together for the bride, and bankrupt themselves. That's why they hate giving birth to girls. It's a burden."

Every day, Indian newspapers carry stories about brides committing suicide because of the dowry system, says de Jong. Sometimes, a bride's family can only pay part of a dowry at first, and must continue paying it off for years. "In the meantime, the groom's family would make life so miserable for the bride and would make her feel so unworthy that they would often commit suicide."

De Jong had heard Indians call Bangalore "the most beautiful city in India." Her opinion is "it's beautiful in a different way." She noticed that Indians have a different attitude about old buildings. "To us, old is only nice when it's maintained. But to them, old is old, and you can tell it's old because it's dilapidated." But de Jong appreciated the colorfulness around her. "The color is especially evident in the trees, the flowers, and the clothing of the women," she observed.



The Hope Chapel in Bangalore.

Are you afraid of Muslims or Buddhists?

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soap operas and the media, says Fouad Masri, director of Arab International Ministry. "They think that all Americans are Christians and anything American is Christian. For example, when a Saudi student told me he looked at a Christian magazine, I asked which one. He replied, *Playboy*. I had to explain that womanizing is not a Christian value." Americans form stereotypes as well.

"Some Americans think all Muslims are terrorists," says Paul Hutchins. "I asked a college professor about inviting a Muslim student for dinner, but he was afraid he would be inviting a terrorist into his home."

Simplify the complicated

In the Bible study Pat Kammert led for her Buddhist friends, a detailed, verse by verse gospel study didn't work. "They kept saying I went too fast but I had slowed down. When I asked God how I could reach them, the phrase, 'Go back,' kept coming to mind. So I made a time line, starting with Adam and Eve, and I told them bit by bit how things unfolded."

Pat's insight was significant because Buddhists and Hindus often regard Christianity as a new religion (only 2000 years old). "Help them understand that the gospel of Christianity began with creation," says Paul Hutchins. "Look at the prophecies of Christ's coming, as early as Genesis 3:15."

Centre on Christ. Talking about Christ as the Son of God is the most important, but most difficult, topic. World religion followers do not believe that Jesus is God in the flesh and the only path to salvation.

Paul Hutchins uses this approach with seekers: "You can come to know God the Father only through Jesus, who taught us God is the heavenly Father. If you seek to know God through Mohammed, you understand him only as an almighty, transcendent God. If you search to know God through Hindu sages, you go through a maze of philosophy to reach an unknowable god. Jesus is the only way to know the person God, our Heavenly Father."

Witnessing to Third World religions brings a new humility as you learn to love people who are different from you and you learn to rely on God more for the words that come out of your mouth.

Jan Johnson is the author of Enjoying the Presence of God *and* Listening to God: Using Scripture as a Path to God's Presence. *She lives in Simi, Calif.*

The awesome tool belt

George W. J. Laidlaw

I've played cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians, and even Star Wars. What do I want to do when I grow up? Being an astronaut, or police officer or movie star or fighter pilot all sound exciting.

I also like handling tools. Dad's tool drawer has screw drivers, a hammer, tape, ruler, pliers, a vice grip, a selection of different nails and screws. A thick pencil with a rectangular shaped lead is needed to write down measurements. I used one like it in Grade 1 last year. When Dad has to fix something, he consults the boss, my mom and she chooses the most important one. I am given the job of getting the tools.

My dad is like a surgeon, he calls for this tool, or that tape or a type of screw driver and I rush to the tool drawer and find what is needed. I guess I'm important. My dad needs my help.

Yesterday, the phone went on the fritz.

"Here, I'll take a look," said my dad. "Sometimes a wire gets loose, there's no point in calling the Bell serviceman."

I got the tools he listed off. He unscrewed the back and carefully took off the cover. The insides were a mess of wires. Dad adjusted one screw and reattached a wire. I watched enthralled. This is something I could do too. Several minutes later the phone was back together.

"Georgie, run next door and get Mrs. Wilson to phone. I bet I've solved the problem," he told me. The phone rang and Dad answered.

"Hello! Hello! Is someone there? I can't hear you." The phone still wasn't working. Eventually my father phoned the Bell Telephone company. He booked a service call for the next day at 4:15 p.m.

"That's great, Dad, I'll be home from school, maybe I can help." My father just nodded, I guess he was disappointed because he couldn't fix the phone.

☎ ☎ ☎

The next afternoon I am waiting at the curb when the green Bell van arrives. A man steps from the vehicle.

"Is this the Petersen's?" he asks.

"Yes, Sir."

He has on a green uniform. The van is filled with equipment. On the roof rack is a long extension ladder. I watch his every move. He goes to the rear doors and opens them. I've never seen so many tools before. There are wires, wirecutters, dozens of pliers, all the neat stuff I could ever want.

He then changes my life.

I watch him reach into a corner and lift out an awesome tool belt. He straps it around his waist. It has wire cutters, a tape measure, tape, three or four sizes of Robertson, Philips and slot screw drivers, at least four different types of pliers, a flash light and a blade knife. It's beautiful.

"Can I help?"

"Sure, I need to carry this meter scope. Could you carry my clipboard?"

I feel wonderful. I watch him test the phone with the scope and take the phone apart. He has it working in 10 minutes. I help him carry the scope back to the van. He even lets me hold the tool belt. It weighs a ton.

With a tool belt like that I could fix anything.

On the corner, two children are waiting, one is an eight-year-old girl and the other, a 10-year-old boy. Smiling to myself, I remember my wait at the curb. I step down from the Bell van. Today, many years later, wearing my tool belt, I have a feeling of contentment. I guess I can fix nearly anything.

George Laidlaw is a freelance writer from Carp, Ont.

In a perfect world

Carl Mills

"Let me think now, what was it called? *The Stand!* That's it. Do you remember that movie? That was a gem."

They remembered and agreed.

"I like the part in which...."

"I like the whole idea!" I interrupted to finish my point. Isaiah deferred to my eagerness.

"It's the concept. Imagine a world in which all but one person in a thousand has been wiped out, and the survivors exist by scavenging the remains. It would be scary at the outset. But after you got used to it, it would be heaven. There'd be so much stuff to go around people wouldn't have to fight over it. If you wanted a car, you could take your pick, and so could everyone else."

"And you could fill it with all the gas you wanted," said Isaiah. "No one would be staffing the gas stations."

"And you could live anywhere you wanted," said Ezekiel. "Your neighborhood would be empty. Pick the biggest house for your own."

"And wear whatever clothes you liked," said Jeremiah. "Throw fashion to the wind. Who'd be there to criticize?"

"And it wouldn't matter if you crashed the car, burned the house or stained the clothes," said John. "There'd be no police or parents."

In a world made perfect by apocalypse — without poverty, without hierarchy, without laws — people could live in harmony.

A wonderful thought, all agreed. In a world made perfect by apocalypse — without poverty, without hierarchy, without laws — people could live in harmony. We tried to make it realistic.

"As I said, it would be scary at the outset. Until they learned how to live in a world without heating, hydro or electricity, people would mistake their freedom for chaos. They would scramble for the things needed for immediate survival. Now here's a question: if it happened to us, what's the first thing you would go for?"

"Cans," said Isaiah. "I'd stockpile cans. In a world without electric refrigeration, people would scramble for them after the perishables perished. I'd hoard them all before anyone else thought of it." He laughed. "Eventually, everybody would have to come to me for food."

It was funny, but we agreed it would be a wise first move.

Except Ezekiel. "Yeah? Well my first move would be to gather all the can-openers! Then you and everyone else would have to come to me for food."

We laughed. A simpler logic, but a wiser first move.

Jeremiah didn't agree. "If it were my first move, I'd go to all the army surplus stores and take their water-purification tablets. In a world without hydro, potable water would be hard to come by. People would come to me for drink before going to you guys for cans or can openers."

That was funnier, and we agreed Jerry would make a greater survivalist.

Except John. "Yeah? Well my first move would be to go to all the gun stores, grab everything I could and destroy the rest. Then I'd *take* your cans, *take* your can openers, *take* your water-purification tablets and *take* everything else you had that I wanted."

We agreed that was the funniest. And all agreed that John's would be the wisest first move, and he would be the greatest survivalist in a world made perfect by apocalypse.

Carl Mills is a technical writer for an engineering firm. He lives in Ottawa.

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Comment

Why bother getting married?

Dear Mary,

I want to fly something by you. I don't know whether you've experienced the same in your (extended) family, but it's happening often enough to us to make us reflect on it.

Recently we received an invitation to attend the wedding of a nephew. As with two nieces whose weddings we have attended during the past 12 months, bride and groom had already been living together for up to four years. It's a not uncommon situation these days, also among Christian young people. They and their friends do not seem to be bothered by it. Our generation feels plenty uneasy. In fact, I know of parents who have refused to attend wedding ceremonies in such circumstances, or have clearly showed their disapproval when attending.

Somewhat to my surprise I have discovered recently that I do *not* feel uneasy anymore. And that got me worried. So I started to think my way through the issue, and behold, I still feel it's okay. I respect those who get married the old fashioned way, wait with living together and sexual intercourse until *the* day. But I also respect those who, like the young people I mentioned, live together and then eventually undertake a legally stronger commitment. From what I could tell, they seemed to have had good reasons to do what they had done and were doing, reasons of commitment to each other, money (the lack of it), career paths, mutual support.

Of course some will make a hash of their relationship in the long(er) run. But then, so do many of our more traditional young folk these days. And I remember from my reading that marriage customs have always changed over the centuries. In the pre-Reformation church it was a sacrament, but then the Protestants decided that marriage would have a civic, not a church focus. In former days marriage was mostly an economic matter in parts of Europe and among certain classes, or one of politics and power. And I really can't find a good reason against sex before official marriage ceremonies. This "rule" has always been breached in substantial percentages, a good indication that perhaps it's a wrong blanket rule.

I'm not advocating promiscuity, nor am I unaware of the dangers of young people thinking that true love forever can be spotted after only a couple of dates. I simply advocate that we recognize "marriage" not to be dependent on "law," be it civic or church. "Marriage," the trothful relationship between two people, better exists long before officialdom has its way. Ceremony should only confirm what is already there. The young people I've talked about clearly demonstrated this truth: they demonstrated their being a married couple on the day they moved in together, and it was the maturity of their marriage that was celebrated on the day civic and church officials were asked to do their things, perhaps some years later.

Like generations of our forebears, our descendants are simply finding new ways to get married. Perhaps we should trust them and bless them instead of frowning all the time.

As I write this I can hear the voices of our readers: "What about immaturity?" "What about sin?" "What about slippery slope?" Etc. To them I want to say: all these may be found pertaining to traditional marriages as well.

"And what about the Bible?" The problem is that I can't find a clear prescription for marriage forms in the Bible. Can you? Oh, there's plenty of stuff about taking marriage and commitment to others seriously, also about not committing adultery and not coveting, etc. But can we then simply impose on those texts the civic and religious rules we're used to and have accepted for ourselves, and read them as the law of God? I can't see it when I keep in mind the marital lives of Abraham, David and Solomon, and also consider that our contemporary marriage routines do not at all look like the ones in the time of Peter and Paul.

I have now witnessed a number of young people arrange and experience marital commitments in ways different from our ways. The best of what I've seen makes me envious of their maturity and insight: my wife and I couldn't hold a candle to them on our own wedding day. And the worst of it seems no worse to me than the worst of other forms, bad stuff also within "Reformed" marriages. So for now I'm prepared to accept their decisions, celebrate with them when I'm invited to do so in the forms they choose, and support them when things get dicey. In the meantime I can subtly let them know that "our ways" were not without merit altogether: Johanna and I will happily celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary this month.

A relieved,
Adrian

Dear Adrian,

I had to chuckle as I read your letter. It brought me back to my working days. As Yogi Berra said, "It's deja vu all over again."

You have listed all the arguments in favor of or at least tolerating living together before marriage. And they're pretty persuasive. But I'm not convinced.

It's not my business to condemn people who choose to live together before marriage. But I always ask: "Why?" The answers I have gotten usually boil down to one thing, namely "We want to check out this commitment business. Are we compatible? Can we live together? Let's find out before we take the Big Step." Or sometimes I hear: "Marriage is just a ceremony and a piece of paper. We're in love and God knows our hearts. We're married in the eyes of God." Or, increasingly these days: "His/her divorce isn't final yet" — always a big red flag, in my opinion.

The problem is you can't "check out" commitment, any more than you can "check out" whether you can handle being pregnant. There's a significant difference between getting in and making it work, or staying a step back and seeing if it will work. Either you are committed to making it work or you're prepared to bail out if it doesn't. And leaving that door open by not getting married is not commitment. Statistics back me up on this. The marriage is not significantly different from among those couples who haven't. Living together is simply not a good predictor of whether the marriage will work.

Furthermore, marriage is not just between two people, or even between two people and God. Families are involved. And couples who do marry after living together tell me that marriage really is different. Family and in-law relationships still have to be navigated, sometimes with more difficulty because the couple has been living together. I know customs related to marriage have changed, and we don't have clear examples of marriage rites in the Old or New Testament. But one thing we do have clearly demonstrated in the Bible: namely, the strong family involvement in the new couple in the choice of partner and circumstances surrounding their getting married. That has significantly changed in our individualistic society, not always for the better.

Mind you, I will celebrate with you the increased commitment made by your nieces and nephew. I've never been able to understand parents who still frown when the kids finally do what they've wanted them to do all along. But the arguments in favor of living together before marriage still leave me asking: "Why?"

Congratulations to you and Johanna on your anniversary. Bob and I follow you next month, celebrating our 45th. But I say that in gratitude, not in pride. We sometimes look at ourselves and at our friends who haven't been able to stay together and we wonder why we have been so blessed while others who started with the same combination of passionate love and incredible naivete haven't been able to hang in.

Marriage is beautiful, incredibly complex and potentially dangerous. I challenge somebody to work that into a song for a wedding ceremony!

Best wishes,
Mary

Adrian Peetoom is a retired educational editor who lives in Waterloo, Ont. Mary Vander Vennen is a retired therapist who lives in Toronto.

Two weeks that were

Bert Hielema

"HERE IS THE NEWS." So start most radio and TV broadcasts. But the next lines often give me the immediate urge to tune out. Often it'll be something like: "Today Barbara Streisand's wedding took place at her home in Malibu. At 58, this is only her second marriage." News nowadays, whether on CBC, PBS or some local station, is practically always parochial, angling on human interest: an interview with a friend or relative of some unfortunate person uttering banalities in a tear-choked voice.

It used to be that governments made news, but apart from Ontario Premier Michael Harris' gaffes about pregnant women spending their extra food allowance on beer, or the Ontario Provincial Police whiling their time away in donut shops, politicians, too, are poor news makers. That's partly because they sound so insincere. Who believes Paul Martin when he threatens to scuttle the Canadian bank mergers?

I admit that we are part of the problem: we have become immune to disaster pictures focusing on floods and famine. We are so overwhelmed with news that it threatens to become meaningless, and even a nuisance.

THE SITUATION I just described makes it hard for me as I sniff around the globe looking for spicy specimens for my column. I try to spot trends, but that's a risky business. However, I don't mind sticking my neck out in the hope that I may motivate readers to read more, and even challenge me.

Why? Simple. I fervently believe that we are soon to enter a radically different era in which everything we hold dear will be up for grabs. That's why I'm trying to take a global view, laced with what I think is a healthy degree of shoulder-shrugging and a so-what skepticism, but grounded in a biblical perspective that some might call liberal but which I call liberating. Christ has set us free and, thus, we should not be slaves to convention.

LAST WEEK I TOOK my turn as summer supply preacher in our church. We use the lectionary (pre-selected Scripture passages occurring in a three-year pattern), so it was my guide. Since Amos 8:11-12 was on the docket I mentioned that we, like those wanderers mentioned there, are unable to find the Word of God because the church has, like Israel and Judah had, lost the Word — that, despite of the Bible being right in front of me.

Based also on Colossians 1 (which was the day's New Testament reading) I entitled my sermon : "Everything, Everywhere" — because in Christ "all things in the heavens, on earth, in the waters under the earth were created," something the church in its pursuit of the phantom soul and an elusive heaven has often failed to realize in a practical way.

I INCREASINGLY FEEL that words are becoming worthless; even this column. Only what we *do* counts, and there we fall so short that the Created Word is lost. Take the weather: for me, always the most interesting part of the news. It suggests to me quite strongly that our reckless, carboholic living is coming back to haunt us because we have failed to see that Christ is "Everything, Everywhere."

I just pulled the "Global Climate Highlights" off the Net, as updated each week by the U.S. weather office. Skimming the summaries they read: "Northern North America: Warm weather spreads eastward"; "Mexico and Southern US: Hot and dry weather continues"; "Southern South America [where it's supposed to be winter]: unseasonably mild conditions reported"; "West Africa: more warm weather"; "Southeastern China: wet weather continues."

All these reports point to the beginning of global warming, with abundant heat, too much water in some places and not enough in others. The forecasters were quite accurate on El Nino. And next will come La Nina, it, too, bringing mischief, perhaps even greater than that her older brother wreaked.

La Nina means younger sister. In the Pacific, where these systems are born, the water temperature in May dropped by 15 degrees Celsius, which is unheard of. Just as the warm water there brought El Nino, the much colder temperatures will bring La Nina. The weather prophets are warning that we can expect wildfires in California, an early and severe hurricane season in the Atlantic and drought in the Midwest breadbasket.

THEN THERE IS RUSSIA, Japan and the IMF. First good old Russia, where the ruble was almost reduced to rubble, with interest rates shooting up to 150 per cent to prevent total ruin. The trouble with the ruble is that in Russia, not the Kremlin but Crime rules supreme, and the corporations don't want to pay income tax. Yeltsin may yell all he wants, but the sin continues and the state purse remains flat. So he can't pay the workers and when money does come from Moscow for, say, the miners in Siberia, the middle-bureaucrats skim it off so that it still doesn't reach the lower levels.

Both Indonesia and Russia needed an extra $20 billion (US) or so from the International Monetary Fund to give them time to implement their no mercy, no money, no meals policies. But because Russia has nuclear weapons, it gets the loans, but poor Indonesia, with an equal population but no dangerous warheads and missiles, gets little or nothing. The IMF funds, already depleted with large loans to Russia, Mexico, Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia, must now come from loans from other nations to keep Russia's missiles at bay. So much for sound banking practices.

IN JAPAN, THINGS are totally different. There the government has money problems of another kind: too much of the filthy lucre, at least among the population. The average Japanese has $100,000 in the bank, which earns him or her mere 0.5 per cent interest per year. The Japanese are so afraid that the banks will go kaput because of their $750 billion (US) in bad loans, that they keep their nest eggs in the Post Office Bank, a government-backed institution.

Basically the Japanese are a very conservative lot — thrifty and clean-living, far too frugal for their own good, say the Americans, who, in general, don't save anything. Our southerly neighbors still remember that the Depression of the '30s was caused by people no longer buying what was available. Ever since then, the main religion has been Consumerism.

But not the Japanese. They fear that with their economy in recession, little or no unemployment benefits, and needing their savings for old age, they must hang on to their reserves. The result: stagnation, and even a threatened depression. Their banking system is in a real mess; people are losing their jobs left and right, and thousands of small businesses are going bankrupt because the banks don't want to renew loans to those businesses.

The Americans keep on telling them that they should let the banks go broke, but since the Japanese believe in life-time employment and loyalty to institutions and employees, this goes against their heart-felt convictions. So, there is Japan: caught dithering between two opposing philosophies.

In the meantime, the entire financial world is holding its breath, both about whether Russia will clean up its act in the next six months and whether Japan will deny its basic conservatism and go on a spending spree. We do live in interesting times!

NOT LONG AGO I READ about a lawyer being disbarred and a preacher being defrocked. It made me wonder whether an electrician can become delighted, a landscaper deflowered and a dry cleaner depressed. And do firefighters ex-pyre?

BACK TO THE HARD news: *Time* magazine, last week, had a cover proclaiming: "KISS YOUR MALL GOODBYE." The article claims that online shopping (that is, via the Internet) is faster, cheaper and better. Well, here in my little village, the merchants are already suffering from the nearest Wal-Mart (35 km away), with its 100 jobs at minimum wage. I wonder: will even those jobs go when everybody orders their stuff online? Already the ongoing factor in Canada's changing economy is the permanent downsizing of the labor force through "labor-saving" technology.

The *Time* article lists only the benefits to the consumer in buying online. My question is: what about the loss of the shopping malls real estate values and the jobs that would disappear if everybody were to shop using the Internet? In the next recession, which will come as sure as night follows day, electronic automation may make service jobs disappear faster than did the manufacturing jobs of yesterday's economy. All these women and men now busy booking flights, selling goods and shipping parcels could well lose their jobs thanks to automation. And that will compound matters, as robots, machines and systems do not buy goods and services or pay income taxes. Perhaps Japan, with its valuing of community and employment over efficiency, has the right answer after all.

Bert Hielema is fortunate in being retired and in not having to fear the disappearance of his paying job. This column is not a "paying job" in any real sense. He calls it "pure pleasure at minimum wage."

Gerald Vandezande:
A voice of faith in the public square

VISION TV reprises this two-part special program at 10:30 p.m. (ET/PT) on **Monday, August 10, 1998**. The second part of the special will be aired a week later, on **August 17**.

For info. call (416) 979-2443.

Classifieds

Classified Rates

(Revised February 1, 1995)

Births	$25.00
Marriages & Engagements	$40.00
Anniversaries	$45.00
2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

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Fax: (905) 682-8313

E-mail: ccadverts@aol.com

Please take advantage of our monthly Business Directory. For the low cost of

$25

you can advertise your business.
(Please add 7% GST).

Births

McLARDY:
Don and Liz (nee Vanderbyl) are happy to announce that God has blessed us with another healthy child.

RAQUEL CARLEEN

was born at home on Sunday, June 21, 1998, weighing 9 lbs. 15 oz. Raquel is another sister for Becky, Heidi, Allsha, Mella, Joshua, Kristy and Denae. She is the 11th grandchild for Mr.& Mrs. William Vanderbyl of Peterborough, Ont. and the eighth grandchild for Mrs. Lillian McLardy and the late Mr. Joseph McLardy of Toronto, Ont.
Home address:
R.R.#3, Cookstown, ON L0L 1L0

Anniversaries

Edmonton Listowel
Alta. Ont.
1958 August 15 1998

"My eye will be upon you" (Ps. 32:8b).

We praise God for the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

RALPH and AUDREY BRUS
(nee WOUDSTRA)

Thanks, Mom and Dad, for the many ways you've loved and supported all of us over the years.

John & Grace Brus — London, Ont.
Randall, Jody, Shawn
Helen & John Greydanus — Listowel, Ont.
Richard, Michelle, Jason, Stephen, Jeffrey, Kristin
Wilma & Kevin van der Leek — Surrey, B.C.
Ethan, Caleb
Bernie & Arlene Brus — St. Jacobs, Ont.
Ashley
Gerald — Listowel, Ont.
Elaine & Tim Beaman — Corunna, Ont.

Open house will be held at the Listowel Christian Reformed Church, on Friday, Aug. 21, 1998, at 7:30 p.m.

Fenelon Falls, Ont.
August 4

SIMON and JOHANNA GRIFFIOEN
(BATELAAN)

Children and grandchildren:
Peter & Martine
Michel, Karen, Thomas, Jenny
Sandra & Nick Koiter
Mark, Brian, Alex, Renae, Debra
Ernie & Kim
Michelle, Robert, Darryl
Ken
Kendalin, Kayla, Jake

Congratulations Mom and Dad. We love you and thank God for our lives together as a family.

Anniversaries

Staphorst Brampton
the Neth. Ont.
1943 August 12 1998

With thankful hearts we celebrate the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

GERARD and GE LAMMERTSEN
(nee BANGMA)

We also celebrate Dad's 80th birthday on Aug. 1, 1998, and our families' 45th year in Canada!

May God continue to bless them in the years to come. Congratulations from your children and grandchildren.

Fenny & Bob Gibbons — Whitby, Ont.
Hisje & Jim Anderson — Uxbridge, Ont.
Joanne & Eric Van Dijk — Burlington, Ont.

Seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Home address: Holland Chr. Homes, Providence Towers #1107, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

1958 August 27 1998

"As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15b).

With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we look forward to celebrating, D.V., the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

JACK and SHIRLEY REITSMA
(nee BEERDA)

It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless you and keep you in His care.

Congratulations and love from,
Fred & Teresa Reitsma — Smithers, B.C.
Renee, Sonia, Trevor, Christiana
Del & Leona McEwen — Smithers, B.C.
Shane, Tanya, Jennifer, Kimberly, Leanne, Jesse (+)
Ray Reitsma — Smithers, B.C.
Mike & Judy Letain — Ste. Rose, Man.
Tyler, Kara
Leroy & Heather Reitsma — Houston, B.C.
Doug & Delores VanDenBoogaard — Sherwood Park, Alta.

Friends and relatives are invited to attend an open house on **Aug. 22, 1998**, from 2 - 4 p.m., at the Aspen Banquet room, Smithers, B.C.
Address: Box 145, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine.
Hundreds of readers Canada-wide.
Single issue $5.
Write to:
#12 923 2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7

Anniversaries

1958 1998

With thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, and the Lord willing, we,

HANK and HENNIE SCHALY

will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary on Saturday, Aug. 22, 1998, with our children, grandchildren and friends.

Walter & Glenda Schaly — Hampton, Georgia
Arend, Tarah, Samantha, Jacob
Gilbert Schaly — Calabogie, Ont.
Henry & Karen Schaly — Burnstown, Ont.
Benjamin, Christopher, Nicolas, Maddy, Katelyn
Marlene & Thane Heins — Burnstown, Ont.
Kiya
Ron & Christi Schaly — Woodstock, Georgia
Bob & Sandra Schaly — Burnstown, Ont.
Ryen
Tim Schaly — Belleville, Ont.
John & Melissa Schaly — Atlanta, Ga.

Open house and gardens on Saturday, Aug. 22, 1998, from 2 - 5 p.m., at our home in Barryvale on Pheasant Run (bring a lawn chair).
Address: R.R. #2, Calabogie, ON K0J 1H0. Phone: (613) 752-0180

"In Memoriam"

In loving memory of a dear husband, father and grandfather,

SIEBE GREIDANUS

who passed away on Aug. 5, 1997, in his 72nd year.

He went away without farewell,
He said goodbye to none.
But Heaven's gate was open wide,
A loving voice said "Come."
Beside his grave we stand today,
A year has passed us by,
And through our tears we celebrate,
That Dad now lives on high.

Beloved husband of Truus, Orillia, Ont.
Dear father and opa of:
Peter & Ruth Greidanus — Burlington, Ont.
Frieda & Chris Smit — Oshawa, Ont.
Amanda
Gary Greidanus — Orillia, Ont.
Jenny Greidanus — Toronto, Ont.
Fred & Janet Greidanus — Kitchener, Ont.
Megan, Emily, Lindsey
Henk & Wendy Greidanus — Franktown, Ont.
Jamie, Sarah
Cory & Joanne Greidanus — Leeds, England
Steven Greidanus — Windsor, Ont.

"And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps. 23:6b)

Obituaries

The Lord took unto Himself our dear son at Sick Children's Hospital, on Saturday, July 4, 1998

ANDREW EDWARD RYPSTRA

aged 2 years.
Beloved son of Sylvia & Ed Rypstra.
Dear brother of Erin, Adam, Ben, Tim, Sarah and Tanya. Loving grandson of Fred & Jenny Rypstra and Arie & Gerda Rutgers.
Funeral service was held on Tuesday, July 7, 1998 at Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, Bowmanville, Ont., Interment Bowmanville Cemetery.
"But Jesus called the children to Him and said: 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'" (Luke 18:16).

On July 20, 1998 the Lord has taken home his child

ANNIGJE BRUULSEMA-BOSMA

in her 97th year.
Beloved wife of the late Thys Bruulsema.
Loving mother of:
Gerald & Susan — Dunnville
Case & Jenny — Ancaster
Jane & Albert Lunshof — Chatsworth.
Loved Oma of 14 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren.
Survived by one sister in The Netherlands.
Their wedding text was Num. 5:24-26, "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace".
The Lord has been faithful to his promise.

Send your questions to **Peter and Marja.** Confidentiality is assured.

Personal

Widower, non-smoker, in his 60s, living in southern Ontario, loving father and grandfather, wishes to share the remaining years of his life with a **sincere lady who loves the Lord.**
Please send letters to **File #2682, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St.Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Classifieds

Accommodation

Looking for Apartment:
Three female students are looking for a space to live for **September 1998 through April 1999**, preferably furnished, in **St.Catharines area**. Call Carolyn DeJong **(905) 349-3028** or Tracy Vanginhoven **(905) 263-8221**.

For Rent

Students, are you planning to study in **London, Ont.**, next year (University of Western Ontario or Fanshawe College) and needing a place to stay? We offer housing that is close to both institutions and would welcome inquiries. Please feel free to contact us by phone: **(519) 660-0922** evenings, **(519) 672-9217** days, fax: **(519) 672-3140** or e-mail: **talsma@skyia.com**

Upper duplex — well maintained, clean, central air, fridge, stove, hardwood floors, 4 pc bath, non-smoker, no pets. **$500 inclusive. Available Sept. 1, 1998.**
North End, St. Catharines.
Call (905) 935-8041

Teachers

FRUITLAND, Ont.: Fruitland John Knox Memorial Chr. School invites applications for a **37.5% part-time Administrator Relief Teacher** for the 1998-1999 school year. The ideal candidate will possess a valid provincial or state teacher certificate, a Christian School Teacher Certificate (CSTC) and have a few years of successful teaching experience in Grade 6 to 8. Persons interested in this position should contact: **Mr. J. de Jager, Principal, at (905) 643-2460** in order to receive application forms. Applications will be received until the position has been filled.

MERVILLE, B.C.: Comox Valley Chr. School requires **two BCCT certified teachers. French teacher needed for Grades 4-9.** Rest of 0.4-0.6 load is negotiable and could include **English 8/9, Science 8/9, Social Studies 8/9, Drama 8 or Art 8.**
0.4 teacher for Math 8-9, Computers 7-9.
Send or fax resume to:
Comox Valley Christian School, Box 425, Merville, BC V0R 2M0, Fax: (250) 337-5632.

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Make a donation for 1998!

Reformed Faith Witness, the new publisher of *Christian Courier*, is a charitable organization which received tax exempt status from Revenue Canada.
Please consider making a financial gift for 1998. All contributions will be used to help *Christian Courier* and the cause of Reformed Christian journalism. Send your cheque and complete the coupon below and we will issue an official receipt. Thank you very much!

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Job Opportunities

ONTARIO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

invites applications for a part-time **Executive Secretary** for the 1998-1999 school year. The ideal candidate will be a person with strong secretarial and administrative experience. He or she is also familiar with the management of the OACSS-member schools. OCSAA requires this person to attend up to 15 meetings per year in the Greater Hamilton area and then to administer secretarial and administrative tasks for up to an additional 35 days per year.

Persons interested in this position should contact **Mr. J. de Jager, OCSAA Secretary at (905) 643-2460 or 643-2121** in order to receive additional information. Applications will be received until **Sept. 15, 1998.**

If you are looking for an exciting position in Christian education, are a self-motivated individual and appreciate working for school principals, then this position may be for you!

The **Board of Seaway Ministry of Classes Eastern Canada and Quinte** invites applicants for a

CHAPLAIN TO SEAFARERS

position in **Montreal harbor**. Must have a heart for evangelism and gifts in cross-cultural ministry. Facility with languages a plus. Responsibilities include presenting the gospel to seafarers, through visiting ships, engaging in spiritual conversation at the Centre, leading in public worship and devotions, and promoting the ministry among the churches. Chaplain must work well with staff and volunteers. Ordination and ministry experience are assets. **Contact Rev. Charles Kooger, P.O. Box 520, Frankford, ON K0K 2C0, (613) 398-7681 or ckooger@reach.net by Aug. 31, 1998.**

Christian Courier

is seeking a full-time

Promotions & Marketing Director

who will focus on:
- generating advertising
- raising subscriptions
- developing a donor base.

The successful applicant will have:
- a commitment to Christian journalism
- fine organizational ability
- excellent communication skills
- computer literacy
- energy and enthusiasm
- the ability to be a team player, yet able to work independently.

Salary commensurate with experience.
Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Fax your letter of application, resume and two references to **(905) 682-8313, attention: Bert Witvoet, Editor.**

What if you couldn't one day next week Walk?

Or maybe you couldn't speak clearly. Or your vision was blurred. That's what it's like to live with multiple sclerosis. But with your help, we can connect with a cure.

1-800-268-7582
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

Classifieds

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Call extended:
— Rev. Jake Kuipers of First CRC, Sarnia, Ont. to Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, Ont.
Calls accepted:
— Rev. Mike Vandyk of Dunnville, Ont. to First CRC, Taber, Alta.
— Rev. John Gerrits of Dixons Corners, Ont. to Kelowna, B.C.
— Dr. R.John Van der Borgh of Maranatha CRC, Woodstock, Ont. to Momence, Ill.
Call declined:
— Rev. John Gerrits of Dixons Corners, Ont. to Grace CRC, Cobourg, Ont.
New addresses:
— Rev. Jelle Nutma, Trillium Village #109, 400 Dominion St., Strathroy, ON N7G 3G8.
— Rev. Peter Janssens, 362 South Delhi, P.O.Box 177, Lucknow, ON N0G 2H0.

Miscellaneous

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There will be no issue of *Christian Courier* on August 14.

Job Opportunities

DIRECTOR OF MINISTRIES

First Christian Reformed Church of **Thunder Bay, Ont.**, is inviting applications for a **Director of Ministries** with the main emphasis on Youth and Evangelism. The successful candidate must be committed to the Reformed faith, biblical inerrancy, 6-day creation, male headship and covenantal theology. Please send your resume to:

Search Committee, c/o Mrs. Faye Dykstra,
2570 Veradale St., Thunder Bay, ON, P7K 1B7.
For more information **call Mr. Allan Streutker at (807) 939-1691.**

Part-time Librarian

The Institute for Christian Studies has a part-time **Librarian** position available for its 25,000 volume library. ICS offers Christian graduate education, rooted in the Reformed tradition.

Preferred qualifications include:

- *Master of Library Science* degree
- good working knowledge of the *Library of Congress* system
- able to work within the religious, intellectual tradition of ICS
- agree with the Christian principles on which the Institute is established
- comfortable in a computerized environment
- excellent English language skills (optimally with reading knowledge of Dutch, Afrikaans, German or French)
- able to work independently
- physically able to do some heavy lifting

Remuneration for this one year contract position will depend on the qualifications of the successful candidate.

Please submit a resume to the attention of:

Dr. Hendrik Hart, Academic Dean
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Christian Courier is throwing caution to the wind and extending a special introductory subscription to people under 40. You may be a newlywed, a student, a single person or a couple with or without kids. As long as you are somewhere between adolescence and middle age, you may subscribe at the ridiculously low price of

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This exceptional offer has been made possible partly through the generosity of a group of friends who believe that the Reformed perspective needs to be kept alive among young Christians. The discounted price applies only to persons who have not subscribed before. Act now! The offer is limited to the first 200 new subscribers. Send us the complete coupon and a $23.50 cheque soon.

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Humor

You'll sleep better knowing this...

40 factoids you didn't know you could live without

1. The sentence "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" uses every letter in the alphabet.

2. The average life span of a major league baseball: 7 pitches.

3. A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.

4. In the 1940s, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) assigned television's Channel 1 to mobile services (two-way radios in taxicabs, for instance) but did not renumber the other channel assignments. That is why North American TV sets have channels 2 and up, but no Channel 1.

5. The only 15 letter word that can be spelled without repeating a letter is uncopyrightable.

6. The reason firehouses have circular stairways is from the days of yore when the engines were pulled by horses. The horses were stabled on the ground floor and figured out how to walk up straight staircases.

7. When opossums are playing 'possum, they are not "playing." They actually pass out from sheer terror.

8. The main library at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind., sinks over an inch every year because when it was built, engineers failed to take into account the weight of all the books that would occupy the building.

9. Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great ruler from history: Spades: King David; Clubs: Alexander the Great; Hearts: Charlemagne; and Diamonds: Julius Caesar.

10. 111,111,111 x 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321

11. If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle; if the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle; if the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

12. Clans of long ago that wanted to get rid of their unwanted people without killing them used to burn their houses down — hence the expression "to get fired."

13. Only two people signed the American colonies' Declaration of Independence on July 4th, John Hancock and Charles Thomson. Most of the rest signed on August 2, but the last signature wasn't added until five years later.

14. "I am." is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.

15. The term "the whole nine yards" came from W.W.II fighter pilots in the Pacific. When arming their airplanes on the ground, the .50 caliber machine gun ammo belts measured exactly 27 feet, before being loaded into the fuselage. If the pilots fired all their ammo at a target, it got "the whole nine yards."

16. The phrase "rule of thumb" is derived from an old English law which stated that a man couldn't beat his wife with anything wider than his thumb.

17. An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.

18. The longest recorded flight of a chicken is 13 seconds.

19. The interstate highway system in the U.S. requires that one mile in every five must be straight. These straight sections are usable as airstrips in times of war or other emergencies.

20. David Prowse was the man in the Darth Vader suit in Star Wars. He spoke all of Vader's lines, and didn't know that he was going to be dubbed over by James Earl Jones until he saw the screening of the movie.

21. The name Jeep came from the abbreviation used in the army for the "general purpose" vehicle, G.P.

22. The Pentagon, in Arlington, Virginia, has twice as many bathrooms as is necessary. When it was built in the 1940s, the state of Virginia still had segregation laws requiring separate toilet facilities for blacks and whites.

23. Cat's urine glows under a blacklight.

24. Nutmeg is extremely poisonous if injected intravenously.

25. The first toilet ever seen on television was on "Leave It To Beaver."

26. Statistically, only one person in two billion will live to be 116 or older.

27. The name Wendy was made up for the book "Peter Pan."

28. Thirty-five percent of the people who use personal ads for dating are already married.

29. There are an average of 178 sesame seeds on a McDonald's Big Mac bun.

30. The world's termites outweigh the human population 10 to 1.

31. Pound for pound, hamburgers cost more than new cars.

32. When Heinz ketchup leaves the bottle, it travels at a rate of 25 miles per year.

33. It's possible to lead a cow upstairs, but not downstairs.

34. The Bible has been translated into Klingon, language of the fictitious Star Trek warrior race.

35. Humans are the only primates that don't have pigment in the palms of their hands.

36. On average, 100 people choke to death on ball-point pens every year.

37. In 10 minutes, a hurricane releases more energy than all the world's nuclear weapons would combined.

38. Elephants can't jump. Every other mammal can.

39. Five Jell-O flavors that flopped: celery, coffee, cola, apple, and chocolate.

40. According to one study, 24 per cent of lawns have some sort of lawn ornament in their yard.

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Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Aug. 7-10 ICS Ontario Summer Conference, featuring Dr. Bob Goudzwaard on the theme: "Proclaim Jubilee: A New Beginning." At the Maple Grove Christian Retreat Centre, **Thamesford**, Ont. Info.: (416) 979-2331 or e-mail: ics@icscanada.edu

Aug. 10 & 17 VISION TV reprises the two-part special: "Gerald Vandezande: A Voice of Faith in the Public Square," on August 10 and 17, at 10.30 p.m. (ET/PT).

Aug. 23 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Jerry Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, 70 Hwy. 53 E., **Ancaster**, Ont.

to Sept. 11 A major 15-yr. retrospective art exhibition by George Langbroek. At the Rodman Hall Arts Centre, 109 St. Paul Cr., **St. Catharines**, Ont. Info.: (905) 684-2925.

Sept. 24-26 CLAC/WRF-sponsored conference exploring christian perspectives on shaping the workplace. At the Holiday Inn, **Burlington**, Ont. Plenary speakers: Don Posterski, Harry Antonides, Lee Hardy, Elwin Beukes and Marc Bacon. Free public presentation with Dr. John Bolt on Frid., Sept. 25, on: "Greed, Goodness, and God - Hope for Canada's Bottom Line." Info.: (905) 670-7386 or vist web page: www.interlog.com/~wrf/cwuf.htm

Sept. 26 Toronto District Chr. High School's 35th Anniversary Celebration Dinner! All friends of TDCH are invited to attend this event at the school, **Woodbridge**, Ont. Tickets $35. Info.: (905) 851-1772.

Oct. 4 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Jacob Kuntz, 3 p.m., CRC, 70 Hwy. 53 E., **Ancaster**, Ont.

Oct. 11 First CRC, **Owen Sound**, Ont. celebrates its 50th anniversary! Variety program on Friday. Homecoming tea/dinner on Saturday. Special service on Sunday. Info.: Linda DeBoer (519) 371-8192. (#)

Nov. 6 Christian Festival Concert by the choirs and brass of the O.C.M.A., Leendert Kooij, director. Guest artists: Andre Knevel, Sander van Marion, Lisette Emmink, the Kooij sisters, and the Concert Band "Euphonia." At 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. Info./tickets: (416) 636-9779. (#)

Nov. 15 Dutch worship service led by Rev. John Klomps, 3 p.m., CRC, 70 Hwy. 53 E., **Ancaster**, Ont.

Nov. 27 Ebenezer CRC, **Jarvis**, Ont. will be celebrating 50 years of service to our God at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Centre, **Port Dover**, Ont. All former and present members are invited to attend. Info.: (519) 587-5069.

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Women's group weaves a rich tapestry

Alan Doerksen

SOUTHBURY, Conn. — "There is something almost mystical which begins when women come together and work with their hands," observes Katherine Valentine. For the past decade, she has seen women's lives become woven together with ties of friendship and faith in The Common Thread, a Christian quilting group.

But The Common Thread is about much more than quilting. Valentine describes it as "an exciting, Christian non-denominational, inter-generational, spiritual renewal program conducted around a quilting frame. The idea was derived from my many years as an art instructor, where I was privy to the many cultural, spiritual and inter-generational diverse groups of women whose busy hands somehow facilitated a great bond."

Sisterhood, spirituality, support

The Common Thread was designed as "a forum of sisterhood, spirituality, support, renewal and rediscovery," explains Valentine. "An American Patchwork Quilt, rich in history and metaphors, was chosen as the medium through which to facilitate these discussions. Each group consists of 12 women who must make a year-long commitment. At the end of the year, both the quilt and spiritual journal, which is kept by the group and filled with words of encouragement, hope and healing, is donated to a woman in need ... women recently widowed, in shelters, nursing homes, prisons, homebound, new mothers, or any woman who needs to know she is not alone."

Each chapter of 12 women starts their one-year commitment with a weekend retreat, at which the group starts a quilt project and spends time in fellowship and prayer. "Over bowls of popcorn, much laughter and rich stories, the retreat helps to forge friendships that last a lifetime," says a Common Thread brochure.

The mission of The Common Thread is: "to bring women together in a creative environment in an effort to:

- celebrate our diverse roles;
- foster new friendships;
- promote spiritual empowerment and Christian sisterhood."

One chapter of The Common Thread at work

National patchwork

Valentine started the group in her home state of Connecticut and hopes it will become a national patchwork of groups. "The Common Thread has quickly caught the attention of women who seem desperate to find a forum of support and sisterhood, and I know that there are many more women who would benefit from this unique and uplifting experience if they knew that such a group existed," Valentine asserts.

"As our program advances, The Common Thread will begin to issue grants to women who need to go back to school, learn computer skills, or to provide seed money to start a home-based business for stay-at-home moms."

Celebrating memories

The Common Thread has several projects which reach out into communities. One is the Memory Quilt project, in which members of a community, church or family are invited to celebrate their cherished memories through a quilting project. And The Common Thread Outreach Program enables interested people to sponsor a chapter of the group in a women's prison, nursing home or women's shelter.

Besides her work with The Common Thread, Valentine is an instructor at the Museum of American Folk Art in New York City and author of "Celebrate American Folk Art Landscapes. Two other founding members of The Common Thread are Beth Cunningham, an instructor at the Brookfield Craft Center who received the 1997 Connecticut Art Teacher of the Year Award, and Marilyn Moffo, the group's executive retreat facilitator.

PHOTOS COURTESY KATHERINE VALENTINE

The finished products.

Canadian evangelicals call for increased aid to Sudan

MARKHAM, Ont. (EFC) — Earlier this month the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) asked Canada to increase its aid to those starving in Sudan. The EFC asked Minister for International Co-operation Diane Marleau to increase Canada's support through the Canadian Investment Development Agency (CIDA) for the international aid effort now underway to save starving civilians caught in Sudan's 15-year-old civil war.

The World Food Program (WFP) estimates that 2.6 million people face starvation in Sudan. The Save the Children Alliance has also estimated that more than two million people are in danger of starving to death, a figure confirmed by the papal administrator for the area, Monsignor Caesar Mazzolari.

The WFP has made an international appeal for $137 million (US) to meet the urgent need in Sudan. Only $58.7 million has been pledged so far.

The radical Islamic government of Sudan is engaged in a civil war against rebel groups in southern Sudan, an area populated mainly by Christians and followers of traditional religions.

News Digest

Bribe backfires

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (EP) — If you can't trust a bribe-taker, who can you trust? A bishop from Argentina's strict Mennonite sect has complained to police that con artists tried to steal a bribe intended to influence local government officials.

According to a report in the daily newspaper *La Nacion*, the bishop was told by the men that the bribe would make the La Pampa province drop its demands that Mennonites teach their children Spanish. The bishop signed an IOU for $50,000, but the men reportedly did nothing to influence the government. Instead, they altered the IOU to read $250,000, then took him to court in an effort to extract payment.

The Mennonites in La Pampa came from Mexico 13 years ago in search of better farm land and an isolated life free of government intrusion. Last year, the La Pampa province ordered them to teach their children the national curriculum, then dropped that demand but said they must teach the children Spanish. The Mennonites speak a form of German.

Ripe new market

TORONTO — Coming soon to a banana near you: movie advertising. Twentieth Century Fox opened up a ripe new area of marketing recently when it linked forces with Dole to promote the movie *Anastasia*.

Fox plastered stickers for the animated feature on 250 million bananas and citrus fruits in U.S. supermarkets, the *Globe and Mail* reports.

Mars not so far away

MARS, Penn. — Mars is easier to reach than you might think. It's 40 km north of Pittsburgh, Penn. There are no canals or red earth, but there is a two-metre high flying saucer, signed by cosmonaut Sergei Krikaley and astronaut Mario Runco, who recently made a "Mission to Mars."

The Borough of Mars, which has a population 1,803, even has a song, says the *Toronto Star*:

"We're citizens of Mars.
We don't make candy bars.
We shine among the stars
Because we are from Mars."